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THE
HUNDRED MERRY TALES:

OR

SHAKSPEARE'S
Jest Book.

Beatrice. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Benedick. No, you shall pardon me.

Beatrice. That I was disdainful—and that I had my good wit out of the HUNDRED MERRY TALES;—Well, this was Signor Benedick that said so.

Much Ado About Nothing. Act II. Sc. I.

LONDON:
J. CHIDLEY, 141 GOSWELL STREET.

1831.

Shakespeare's MERRY TALES 12mo,
with, SCARCE, 8s 6d 1845
CONTENTS: "A Hundred Merry Tales" being the work
which Beatrice speaks in "Much Ado about Nothing"
also the further portion of this curious collection
published by S. W. Singer under the supposition that they
were the much desired and long-sought tales.

Bl. from Orel. smun

2706 e. 321

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PRINTED BY C. AND W. REYNELL, BROAD ST. GOLDEN SQ.



TO THE READER.

THIS curious little volume was picked up by the Editor some years ago, and from the amusement it afforded himself and a few of his friends, he is induced to believe that it may not prove altogether uninteresting or unacceptable to the public. One modern edition only, and that a limited and expensive one,—not intended it appears for general circulation, but merely as a literary curiosity,—was printed in the year 1814, under the title of SHAKSPEARE'S JEST BOOK.

The extreme rarity of the work, combined with its interesting contents and high antiquity, form the best and indeed only apology for its re-appearance. The

obsolete phraseology and spelling have been scrupulously retained, the Editor conceiving that an attempt to modernize its antique style would go far to destroy the peculiar characteristics of the book. Excepting the substitution of the Roman character for the old black letter, the reader will receive this curious and unique collection of jests in the very guise in which it was discovered,*—the language quaint—the construction faulty—the words variously and venerably ill-spelt—and the stops almost invariably misplaced. By the way, the many apparently intentional variations in the mode of spelling the same word, even in the same sentence, involve a question of some interest. It is difficult to determine whether this diversity of *spelling* is wholly attributable to the unsettled state of the language at the period the book was

* In the Roxburghe collection, now in that of the Marquis of Blandford.

written,* or whether it was not considered ornamental; somewhat akin perhaps to the fastidiousness in modern composition which as studiously rejects the repetition of words and phrases. Whatever the cause, to the *fact* is unquestionably owing our incertitude as regards the orthography of some of our most celebrated names, and foremost in the list may be noted that of Shakspeare himself.

Into the origin or antiquity of this little volume it forms no part of the present task to enquire, more especially as some extracts from the Preface to the edition above alluded to, so ably and so amply supply both.

‘That this little book is the one from which Benedick had accused Beatrice of stealing all her “good wit,” can I think be established satisfactorily; but the extra-

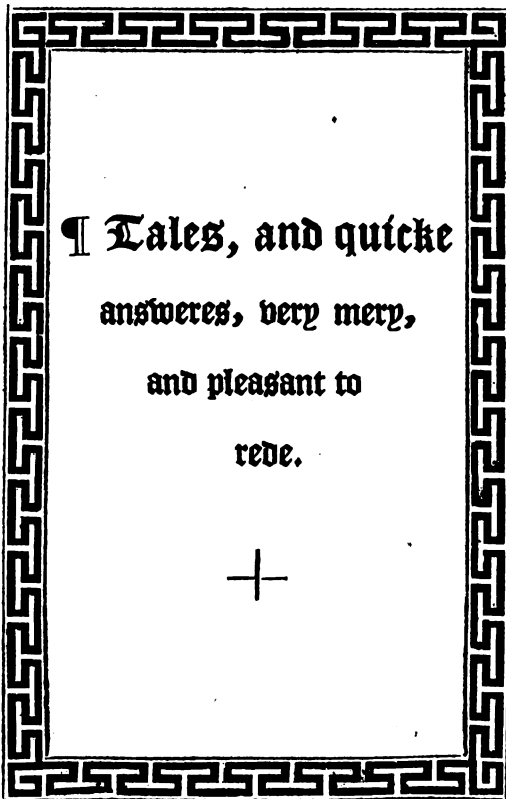
* It is supposed, about the time of Henry the Eighth.

ordinary rarity of it must account for its having escaped the diligence of the editors of our great Dramatic Bard. I cannot agree with Mr Steevens and Mr Reed, that Shakspeare by the "Hundred Merry Tales," meant the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," or the "Decameron" of Boccaccio.... They are not sources from whence the lively Beatrice could have derived her sarcastic quips and lively repartees, as they consist principally in amorous stories; many of them, in the latter, terminating tragically. Neither does it appear that either of those works appeared sufficiently early in an English dress. Shakspeare would of course refer to a book of jests then in the hands of every one; and it must be confessed that the present collection was a more probable source for Beatrice to obtain her "quips and cranks" than either the "Cent Nouvelles" or the "Decameron."

Although the original title of these jests was "Tales and Quicke Answeres," it appears from the research of the former editor that their popular title was the "Hundred Merry Tales," in reference perhaps to the number of stories originally contained in the volume.

Later authors appear to have liberally availed themselves of this collection; and among its jests or "merry tales," the reader will not fail to recognize many an old acquaintance, in the shape of here and there an antiquated tale or fable.

'The moral reflections which are made to accompany many of the stories is an amusing feature in the collection; for their *naïveté* frequently excites a smile, even when the tale itself would fail to do so.'



I Tales, and quicke
answeres, very mery,
and pleasant to
rede.



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¶ *Thus endeth the Table.*



T A L E S

AND

QUICKE ANSWERES.

¶ *Of hym that rode out of London and had his seruaunt folowyng on foote. i.*

¶ THERE was a manne on a tyme that rode v. myle out of London, and had his seruaunt folowyng after him on fote, the whiche came so nere, that the horse strake hym a great stroke vpon the thye. The seruaunte thynkyng to be reuenged, toke and threwe a great stone at the horse, and hytte his mayster on the raynes of the backe, who thought it had bene his horse. He within a whyle loked backe and chydde his seruaunte bycause he came haltynge so farre behynde: the seruaunt aunswered: Sir your horse hath gyuen me suche a stroke vpon my thygh, that I can go no faster. Trewely said his mayster, the horse

B

is a great kyckar, for lyke wyse with his hele right now he gaue me a great stroke vpon the raynes of my backe.

¶ *Of hym that preached on saynt Christophers day. ij.*

¶ A FRYERE that preached vpon a saynt Christofers daye, greatly laudynge saynte Christopher, sayde: what a prerogatyue hadde he here in erthe, in his armes to beare our Sauioure? was there euer any lyke hym in grace: A homely blount felowe heryng him aske twyse or thryse that question so earnestly, answered: yes mary, The asse that bare both hym and his mother.

¶ *Of the Frenche man, that stroue with the Janway for his armes. iij.*

¶ THERE was one amonge the Janwayes, that the Frenche kyng had hyred to make warre agaynst the Englysshe men, whiche bare an oxe heed peynted in his shelde: the whiche shelde a noble man of France challenged: and so longe they stroue, that they must nedes fyght for it. So at a day and place appoynted the frenche gallaunt came into the felde rychely armed at all

peces. The Janway all vnarmed came also in to the felde, and said to the frenche man, wherefore shall we this day fyght? Mary sayd the frenche man, I wyll make good with my body, that these armes were myne auncetours before thyne. what were your auncetours armes, quod the Janwaye? An oxe heed, sayd the frenche man. Than sayde the Janwaye, here nedeth no batayle: For this that I beare is a coves heed.

By this tale ye perceyue howe nycely the vayne braggyng of the frenche man was deryded.

¶ *Of the curate that sayde our Lorde
fedde v. c. persons. iiij.*

¶ A CERTAINE curate preachynge on a tyme to his parysshens sayde, that our Lorde with fyue loues fedde v. hundred persones. The clerke herynge hym fayle, sayde softly in his eare: Sir ye erre, the gospell is v. thousande. Holde thy peace foole said the curate, they wyll scantly beleue, that they were fyue hundred.

¶ *Of hym that profered his doughter in
mariage. v.*

¶ THERE was a man vpon a tyme, whiche profered his doughter to a yonge man in mariage, the which yonge manne refused her, sayenge, that she was to yonge to be maryed. I wys, quod her foolysshe father she is more able than ye wene. For she hath borne iii. children by our parysshe clerke.

Lo by this tale ye se, that foles can nat telle what and whan to speake, therefore it were best for them to kepe alway silence.

¶ *Of them that came to London to bye a
Crucifixe. vi.*

¶ THERE were certayne men vpon a tyme sent out of a village to London to bye a Crucifixe of wodde. The Caruer that they came to, seyng and heryng by theyr wordes, that they were but folysshe blount felowes, asked them, whether they wolde haue the ymage a lyue or elles deade. whiche question so abasshed them, that they went a syde to deuyse whether was beste. So whan they had spoken priuely to gether, they came to the caruer agayne and said, they wold haue the image a lyue:

for if theyr neighbours at home were nat so contente, they myghte lyghtly kylle hym.

¶ *Of hym that folowed his wyfe to buryenge. vij.*

¶ A MAN that wepyng folowed his wyfe to buryenge, rebuked his lyttel sonne, that wente with hym, bycause he sange, sayenge, that he was peuysshe and madde to synge at his mothers buryenge, but he shulde rather be sory and wepe. The chylde answered: Father, seyng ye gyue to these prestes money to synge at my mothers buryenge, why be ye angry with me, that aske you nothyng for my syngyng? His father aunswered: the preestes offyce and thyne is nat all one.

By this tale ye may perceyue that all thynges beseme nat euery body.

¶ *Of hym that felle in to the fyre. viij.*

¶ A FELOWE that was frowarde to his wyfe, vsed to be oute drynkyng many tymes verry late. So on a nyght he taryed so longe oute, that his wyfe wente to bedde, and badde her mayde make a good fyre, and tarye vp for hym. About xij. of the clocke home he came, and as he stode

warmynge him by the fyre his hede was so tottye, that he felle in to the fyre. The mayde seing him fall ranne vp cryenge to her maistres, and sayd: Alas my maister is fallen and lyeth longe straughte in the fyre. No force mayde, said her maistres, let him lye and take his pleasure in his owne house, where so euer him listeth.

¶ *Of him that used to cal his seruauant the kinge of foles. ix.*

¶ THERE was a man that had a dulle lump-isshe felow to his seruant, wherfore he vsed commonly to calle him the kinge of fooles. The felowe at laste waxed angry in his minde to be alway so called and sayde to his mayster: I wolde that I were the kinge of foles, for than no man coulde compare with me in largenes of kingedome, and also you shulde be my subiect. By this, one may perceiue, that to moch of one thing is not good: many one calleth an other fole, and is more fole him selfe.

¶ *Of the yonge woman that sorowed so greatly her husbondes deth. x.*

¶ THERE was a yonge woman, the whiche for her husbande that laye a dyenge, sorowed oute of all measure, wherfore her

father came often to her and sayde: Daughter leaue your mourninge, for I haue prouyded for you a nother husbnde, a farre more goodly man. But she did nat onely continue in her sorowe, but also was greatly displeased, that her father made any motion to her of an other husbnde. Assone as she had buried her husbnde, and the soule masse was songe, and that they were at dyner, betwene sobbynge and wepynge she rowned her father in the eare, and sayde: Father, where is the same yonge man, that ye said shuld be min husbnde? Lo thus, may ye se, that women sorowe ryght longe after theyr husbondes be departed to God.

¶ *Of him that kissed the mayd with the longe nose. xi.*

¶ A BABLYNGE gentylman, the whiche on a tyme wolde haue bassed a fayre mayde, that had nat the leest nose, sayde: How shulde I kysse you: youre nose wyll not suffre our lyppes to mete? The mayden waxinge shamefast and angrie in her mynde, for with his scoffe he a lyttell touched her, answered on this wyse: Syr if ye can not kysse my mouth for my nose, ye may kysse me there as I haue nere a nose.

Ye may by this tale lerne, that hit is folye so to scoffe, that youre self therby shulde be laughed to scorne agayne. One that is ouer couetous ought nat to attwite an other of prodigalite. Thou arte her brother (sayd Alcmeon to Adrastus) that slew her husbände. But he blamed nat Alcmeon for an others faute, but obiected against him his owne. Thou hast with thy hande (sayde he) slayne thin owne mother. It is nat ynough to haue rebukes redie, and to speke vyle wordes agaynst others : for he that so shuld do, ought to be without any vyce. For of all men sayth Plutarchus, he ought to be innocent and haue the lyfe vnculpable, that wolde reprehende the fautes of other. The lyttell morall boke saythe :

It is a foule thyng worthye rebuke and blame
A vyce to reprehende and do the same.

¶ *The uplandisshe mans answer, concerninge the steple and pulpit. xii.*

¶ IN a certayne place, on a tyme the perrysshyns had pulled downe theyr steple, and had buylded it vp newe agayne, and had put out theyr belles to be newe founded : and bycause they range nat at the bysshops entrynge in to the village, as they were wont

and acustomed to do, he asked a good homely man, wether they had no belles in thyr steple: he answered, no. Than sayde the bysshop, ye may sylle awaye your steple. why so, and please your lordship sayd the man? Bycause hit stondeth vacant, said the bysshop? Than sayde the man, we may well sylle a way an other thinge, that we haue in our churche. what is that, sayd the bysshop, That is a pulpit quod he. for this vii. yere ther was no sermon made therin.

¶ *Of the beggers answere to mayster Skelton the poete. . xiii.*

¶ A POURE begger, that was foule, blacke, and lothlye to beholde, cam vpon a tyme vnto mayster Skelton the poete, and asked him his almes. To whom mayster Skelton sayde: I praye the gette the awaye fro me, for thou lokeste as though thou camest out of helle. The poure man perceyuing he wolde gyue him no thynge, answerd: For soth syr ye say trouth, I came oute of helle. why dyddest thou nat tary styl there, quod mayster Skelton: Mary syr quod the begger, there is no roume, for suche poure beggers as I am, all is kepte for suche gentyl men as ye be.

¶ *Of the chaplen that sayde our ladye
matens a bed. xiiii.*

¶ A CERTAYNE lordes chaplen bosted on a tyme syttyng at his lordes table, that he sayde our lady matyns euery morninge besyde all his other seruice and orisons. The lorde to proue whether his chaplen did as he sayde, arose yerly on a morninge, and went to his chaplens chamber, and called him, saying: where be ye syr wylliam: Here and please your lordshyp (quod he) in my bedde. why, sayd the lorde, I thought ye had ben vp and sayenge of our lady matyns. I am now sayinge it, quod the chappleyn. what lienge in your bedde, quod the lord? why syr, sayd the chapplain where shulde women be serued but a bedde?

¶ *Of hym that loste his purse in
London. xv.*

¶ A CERTAYN man of the countre, the whiche for busines came vp to London, lost his purse as he wente late in the euenyng: And by cause the summe therin was great, he sette vp bylles in dyuers places, that if any man of the cyte had

founde the purse, and wolde brynge it agayne to him, shulde haue welle for his laboure. A gentyll man of the Temple wrote vnder one of the byls, howe the man shulde come to his chamber, and tolde where. So whan he was come, the gentyll man asked him fyrst what was in the purse, secondli what countrey man he was, and thirdly what was his name. Syr quod he xx. nobles, was inne the pourse, I am halfe a walshe man : and my name is John vp Jankyn. John vp Jankyn (sayde the gentyll man) I am gladde I knowe thy name. For so longe as I lyue, thou nor none of thyn name shal haue my purse to kepe. And now fare well gentyll John vp Jankyn. Thus he was mocked to scorne and went his way.

Hereby ye may perceyue, that a man can not haue a shrewde tourne, but otherwhyle a mocke withall.

¶ *Of the marchaunt that loste his bodgette betwene Ware and Lon. xvi.*

¶ A CERTAYNE marchant betwene Ware and London lost his bodget, and a c. li. therin, wherfore he caused to proclayme in dyuers market townes, who so euer that founde the

sayde bodget, and wolde bryng it agayne, shulde haue xx. li. for his labour. An honeste husbande man, that chaunsed to fynde the sayde bodget, brought it to the bailly of Ware, accordynge to the crye, and required his xx. li. for his labour, as it was proclaymed. The couetous marchant whan he vnderstode this, and that he muste nedes pay xx. li. for the fyndynge, he sayd, that there was an c. and xx. li. in his bodgette, and so wolde haue hadde his owne money and xx. li. ouer. So longe they stroue, that the matter was brought before mayster Vauasour the good Judge. whan he vnderstode by the bayllye, that the crye was made for a bodget with an c. li. therin, he demanded where hit was? here quod the bailly, and toke it vnto him. Is it iuste an c. li. sayde the Judge? ye trulye, quod the bayllye. Holde sayde the Judge (to him that founde the bodget) take thou this money vnto thyne owne vse: and if thou hap to fynde a bodgette with a c. and xx. li. therin, brynge it to this honest marchante man. It is myn, I lost no more but an c. li. quod the marchant. ye speke nowe to late, quod the judge.

By this tale ye may vnderstande, that they that go about to disceyue other, be

often tymes disceyued them selfe. And some tyme one fallethe in the dytche, that he him selfe made.

¶ *Of hym that was called cuckolde.* xvij.

¶ A CERTAYNE man, whiche vpon a tyme in company betwene earnest and game was called cuckolde wente angerly home to his wyfe and sayde: wyfe, I was this day in company called kockolde, whether am I one or nat? Syr truly, sayde she, ye be none. By my fayth (sayde he) thou shall swere so vpon this boke, and helde to her a boke. She denyed hit longe, but whan she sawe there was no remedy, she sayde: well sythe I must nedes swere, I promyse you by my faythe, I will swere truly. yea do so quod he. So she toke the boke in her hande and sayd: By this boke syr ye be a cokolde. By the masse hore sayd he, thou lyst, thou sayste it for none other cause but to anger me.

By this tale ye may parceyue, that it is nat best at all tymes for a man to beleue his wyfe, though she swere vpon a boke.

¶ *Of the iolous man.* xvij.

¶ A MAN that was ryght iolous on his wyfe, dreamed on a nyght as he laye a bed with her and slepte, that the dyuell aperd vnto him and sayde: woldest thou nat be gladde, that I shulde put the in suretie of thy wyfe? yes sayde he. Holde sayde the dyuell, as longe as thou hast this rynge vpon thy fynger, no man shall make the kockolde. The man was gladde therof, And whan he awaked, he founde his fynger in *****.

¶ *Of the fatte woman that solde frute.* xix.

¶ As a greate fatte woman sate and solde frute in a lente, there came a yonge man bye, and behelde her frute earnestly, and specially he caste his eyes on her fygges, she asked him, as was her gyse: Syr wyll ye haue any figges? they be fayre and good. And whan she sawe he was content: she sayde howe manye? wyll ye haue fyue li.? He was content. So she wayed him oute fyue li. in to his lappe: and whyle she layde a side her balaunce, he wente his waye faire and softely. whan she tourned her to haue taken money, and sawe her

chapman go his waye, she made after a pace, but faster with her voice, than with hir fote. He dissemblinge the mater wente styll forth on. She made suche a cryenge and folkes gathered so faste, that he stode styll. So in the preace he shewed to the people all the matter, and said: I bought nothing of hir, but that that shevnbyd gaue me, I toke, and if she wyll I am contente to go be fore the Justice.

¶ *Of a poller that begyled a preste. xx.*

¶ VPON a tyme in Andwarpe a false pollynge felowe came vnto a certeyne preste, that hadde his purse hangynge at his gyrdell strouttinge oute full of money, that he a lyttell before had resceyued, and gentilly gretynge hym sayde: Good mayster, our parysshe preste bad me bye him a palle (which is the vppermoste vestement, that a preste syngeth masse in) if it wolde please you to go with me, I were moche bounde to you: for our curat and you be of one stature. The preste was contente. whan they came there, where he wolde bye it, the palle was brought forth, and the preste dyd it on: the poller loketh and toteth theron, and preyseth it, but he layde a wyte, that it was to shorte before. Nay

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quod the syller, the faute is nat in the vestement, hit is the strouttinge purse vnderneath that beareth hit vp: Shortely to speake, the prest dyd of his purse, and layde hit by, and than the vestiment they be helde agayne. whan the poller saw the preste was tourned, he snatched vp the purs, and toke his legges and to go. The preste rounne after with the vestement on his backe: and the vestement maker after the prest. The prest bad stop the the thefe, the siller bad stop the prest, the poller bade holde the mad preste, and euery man wende he had ben mad in dede, bicause he had the vestement on his backe. And so whyle one letted an other, the false poller went his waye.

¶ *Of Papirius pretextatus.* xxi.

¶ AULUS Gellius reherseth, how the Senators of Rome on a tyme helde a great counsaile. Before which tyme the senators chyldren, called of their garmentes *Pueri pretextati*, vsed to come in to the parlement house with theyre fathers. So at this tyme a chylde called Papyrius, cam in with his father and herde the great counsayl the which was straytely commaunded to be kept secrete tyll hit was decreed.

whan this chylde came home, his mother asked him what the counsaile was. The chylde answered, hit oughte nat to be toldé. Now was his mother more desyrous to knowe hit than she was before: wherfore she enquired more straitly and more violentlye. The chylde beinge sore constrayned of his mother, shortelye deuysed a proper merye leasyngé. It is reasoned in the parlemente (quod he) whether of both shulde be more profytable for the comon welth, a man to haue ii. wiues or els a woman ii. husbandes. whan she harde him say so, her mynde was pacified: and forth with she wente and tolde hit to the other matrones.

On the morowe a great company of the moste notable wyues of Rome came to the parlemente house weping, and humbly prayen: that rather one woman shuld be maryed vnto ii. men that ii. wemen to one man. The Senatours entringe in to the court, what with the sodayn assembling of the wyues and of their request, were right sore astonied, than the childe Papyrius stode forth, and enformed the senatours, how his mother wold haue compelled him to vtter the secrete counsayle: and howe he to content her mynde, feyned that leasyngé. For which dede the Senatours right hyghly commended the childes fydelite and

wytte. And forth with they made a law, that no child after that (saue only Papirius) shuld come in to the parlement house with his father. And for his great prudence in that tender age he had gyuen to hym, to his great honour, this surname *Pretextatus*.

Wherby ye may se, that the hygh treasure of man, and greatest grace, resteth in well ordrynge of the tonge. The moste prudent poete Hesiodus sayth: The tonge shulde not ronne at large, but be hydde as a precious treasure. For of all the membres of man, the tonge yll ordered is the worste. The tonge blasphemeth God: The tonge sklaundereth thy neyghbour. The tonge breaketh peace, and stereth vp cruell warre, of all thynges to mankynde moste mischefull, the tonge is a broker of baudrye: the tonge setteth frendes at debate: The tonge with flatteryng, detraction, and wanton tales enfecteth pure and clene myndes: the tonge without sworde or venome strangleth thy brother and frende: and brefely to speake, the tonge teacheth cursed heresy, and of good Christiens maketh Antichristes.

¶ *Of the corrupte man of lawe.* xxij.

¶ THERE was a man of lawe, whiche on a tyme shulde be iudge betwene a poure man and a ryche: the poure man came, and gaue hym a glasse of oyle (whiche was as moche as his power wold stretch to) and desyred, that he wolde be good in his matter: yes quod he, the matter shall passe with the. The riche man perceyuyng that, sente to the same iudge a fatte hogge, and prayed hym to be fauorable on his syde. wherefore he gaue iudgement agaynst the poure man. whan the poure man sawe that he was condemned, pytously complaynyng he sayd to the Judge: Syr I gaue you a glasse of oyle, and ye promysed by your faith, the matter shulde passe with me. To whom the iuge sayde: For a trouth there came a hogge into my house, whiche founde the glasse of oyle, and ouerthrewe and brake it: and so through spyllynge of the oyle I cleane forgot the.

Wherby ye may se, that euermore amonge
The ryche hath his wyll, the poure taketh wronge.

¶ *Of kyngge Lowes of France and the
husbande man.* xxiiij.

¶ WHAT tyme kyngge Lowes of Fraunce, the xi. of that name, bycause of the trouble that was in the realme, kepte hym selfe in Burgoyne, he chaunced by occasion of huntinge to come acqueynted with one Conon a homely husbande man, and a plaine meanyng felowe. In whiche maner of men the hygh princes greatly delyte them. To this mans house the kyngge ofte resorted from huntynge. And with great pleasure he wolde eate radysshes rotes with hym. within a whyle after whan Lowes was restored home, and had the gouernaunce of France in his hande, this husbande man was counsailed by his wyfe, to take a goodly sorte of radysshe rotes and to go and gyue them to the kyng, and put him in mynd of the good chere, that he had made hym at his house. Conon wolde nat assent therto, what folysshe woman quod he, the great princes remembre nat suche smalle pleasures. But for all that she wolde not reste tyll Conon chose out a great syght of the fayrest rootes, and toke his journey towarde the courte. But as he

went by the way, he yete vp all the radysshes saue one of the greatestt.

Conon peaked in to the courte, and stode where the kynge shulde passe by: By and by the kynge knewe hym, and called hym to hym. Conon stepte to the kynge and presented his rote with a gladde chere. And the kynge toke it more gladly, and bad one, that was nerest to hym, to laye it vp amonge those iewels that he best loued: And than commaunded Conon to dyne with hym. whan dyner was done he thanked Conon: and whan the kyng sawe that he wolde departe home, he commaunded to guye hym a thousande crownes of golde for his radisshe rote. whan this was knowen in the kinges house, one of the court gaue the kyng a propre myniqn horse. The kyng perceiuing, that he dyd it, bicause of the liberalite shewed vnto Conon, with very glad chere he toke the gyft, and counsailed with his lordes, how and with what gyft he myght recompence the horse, that was so goodly and faire. This meane while the picke thank had a meruailous great hope, and thought in his mynde thus: If he so wel recompensed the radysshe rote, that was gyuen of a rusticall man: howe moche more largely wyl he recompence suche an horse, that is gyuen of me that am of the

courte: whan euery man had sayde his mynde, as though the kynge had counsayled aboute a great weyghty matter, and that they hadde longe fedde the pycke thanke with vayne hope, at last the kyng sayd. I remembre nowe, what we shal gyue hym: and so he called one of his lordes, and badde hym in his eare, go fetche hym that that he founde in his chambre (and told hym the place where) featly folded vp in sylke. Anone he came and brought the radysshe roote, and euen as it was folded vp, the kyng with his owne hande gaue it to the courtier, sayenge: we suppose your horse is well recompensed with this iewell, for it hath cost vs a thousande crownes. The courtier went his way neuer so glad, and whan he had vnfolded it, he found none other treasure, but the radysshe rote almoste wethered.

¶ *Of an other picke thanke, and the same kinge. xxiiij.*

¶ Vpon a time a seruant of the fornamed kinges, seyng a louce crepe vpon the kynges robe, kneled downe, and put vp his hande, as though he wolde do somewhat, and as the kynge bowed hym selfe a lyttell, the man toke the louce, and conueyed her

away priuely. The kynge asked hym what it was, but he was ashamed to shew. So moche the kyng instanted hym that at laste he confessed hit was a louce. Oh quod the kynge, it is good lucke. For this declareth me to be a man: for that kynde of vermyne principally greueth mankynde: specially in youth. And so the kynge commanded to gyue him fyfty crownes for his labour.

Nat longe after an other, seynge that the kynge gaue so good a rewarde for so smalle a pleasure, came and kneled downe, and put vp his hande, and made as though he toke and conueyed some what priuelye awaye. And whan the kynge constrayned him to tell what hit was, with moche dissemblyng shamfastnes he sayde, hit was a flee. The kynge perceyuinge his dissimulation, sayd to him, what woldest thou make me a dogge? and so for his fifty crownes, that he prooled for, the kinge commaunded to gyue him fiftie strypes.

Wherby ye maye note, that there is great difference betwene one that doth a thyng of good will and mynde, and hym that doth a thyng by crafte and dissimulation. whiche thinge this noble and moste prudent prince well vnderstode. And one ought to be well ware howe he hath to do with highe

princes and their busynes. And if Ecclesiast forbid, that one shall mynde none yll to a kynge, howe shulde any dare speake yll?

¶ *Of Thales the astronomer that fell in a ditch.* xxv.

¶ LAERTIUS wryteth, that Thales Milesius wente oute of his house vpon a time to beholde the starres for a certayn cause: and so longe he went backward, that he fell plumpe into a ditche ouer the eares. wherfore an olde woman, that he kepte in his house laughed and sayde to him in derision: O Thales, how shuldest thou haue knowlege in heuenly thinges aboue, and knowest nat what is here benethe vnder thy feet?

¶ *Of the astronomer that theues robbed.* xxvi.

¶ As an astronomer that satte vpon a tyme in the market place of a certayne towne, and toke vpon him to dyuine and to shewe what theyr fortunes and chaunces shuld be that came to him: there came a felow and tolde him (as it was in dede) that theues had broken in to his house, and had borne away all that he hadde. These tidinges greued

him so sore, that all heuy and sorowefullye he rose vp and wente his waye: whan the felowe sawe him do so, he sayde: O thou folissh and madde man, goest thou aboute to dyuine other mennes matters, and arte ignorant in thine owne?

This tale (besyde the blynd errorr of suche foles) toucheth them that handell theyr owne matters lewdly, and wyll intermedle with in other mens. And Cicero saythe: That wyse man, that can nat profytte him selfe, hath but lytell wysdome.

¶ *Of the plough man that sayde his
pater noster. xxvij.*

¶ A RUDE vplandisshe plough man, whiche on a tyme reprouynge a good holy father sayd, that he coude say all his prayers with a hole mynde and stedfaste intention, without thinkyng on any other thyng. To whome the good holy man sayde: Go to, saye one *Pater noster* to the ende, and thynke on none other thyng, and I wyll gyue the myn horse. That shall I do, quod the plough man, and so began to saye, *Pater noster qui es in celis*, tyll he came to *Sanctificetur nomen tuum*, and than his thought moued him to aske this question:

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yea but shal I haue the sadil and bridel withal? And so he lost his bargain.

¶ *Of him that dreamed he founde golde.*

xxviiij.

¶ THERE was a man, that sayde in company vpon a tyme, howe he dreamed on a nyghte, that the deuyll ledde him in to a felde to dygge for golde: whan he had founde the golde, the deuyll sayde: Thou canste not carye hit a waye nowe, but marke the place, that thou mayste fetch it an other tyme. what marke shall I make, quod the man? **** ouer hit, quod the deuyll, for that shall cause euery man to shonne the place, and for the hit shall be a speciall knowlege. The man was contente and dyd so. So whan he awaked out of his slepe, he parceyued, that he had foule defyled his bedde. Thus betwene stynke and dyrte vp he rose, and made him ready to go forth: and laste of all he put on his bonette, wherin also the catte had ***. For great stinke wherof he threwe away his couer knaue, and was fayne to wasshe his busshe. Thus his golden dreame tournedde all to dyrte.

Tibullus sayth: Dreames in the nyght begylen: and cause fearefull myndes to drede thynges that neuer shal be. But yet Clau-

dian sayeth: Dreames in sondrye wyse figured gyueth warnynge of vnluckye thynges. And Valerius Maximus wryteth, that as Hamylcar besiged the cyte of Syracuse, he dreamed that he harde a voyce saye, that he the nexte daye shulde suppe with in the cyte. wherfore he was ioyfull, as thoughe the victorie from heuen had ben to him promised. And so apparayled his hooste to assaute the towne: in which assaute he chaunced to be taken in his lodgyng by them of the cyte, and so bounden lyke a prysoner, they ledde hym in to theyr cite. Thus he more disceyued by hope, than by his dreame, supped that nyghte within the citie as a prisoner, and nat. as a conquerour as he presumed in his mynde. Alcibiades also hadde a certayne vision in the nyghte of his miserable ende.

This tale sheweth that dreames sometyme come to passe by one meane or other. And he that desyreth to knowe more of dreames wrytten in our englysshe tonge, let hym rede the tale of the nounnes preste, that G. Chauser wrote: and for the skeles howe dreames and sweuens are caused, the begynnyng of the boke of Fame, to whiche the sayde Chauser compiled with many an other matter full of wysedome.

¶ *Of the crakyng yonge gentyll man, that
wold ouerthrowe his enemys a myle of.*

xxix.

¶ A YONGE gentyl man in a cite that was beseged, rebuked the other and called them cowherdes, bycause they wolde not issue out and fight with their enmyes. So he armed at all peces lepte on horsebacke, and galopte out at the gates. whan he thus crakyng had prycked on aboute a myle, he encountred with manye, that retourned home from the skyrmysshe sore wounded. wherfore he beganne to ryde a softer pace. But whan he harde the hydous noyse, and sawe a myle frome hym howe fyerslye they of the cite and theyr enmyes assayled eche other, he stode euen styll. Than one that harde his crakyng before asked him why he rode no nere to fyghte with theyr enmyes. He answered and sayde: Trewly I fynde nat my selfe so able and strong in armes, that my harte wyl serue me to ryde any nere to them.

Wherby may be noted, that nat onely the force of the mynde, but also of the body shulde be wel consydred. Nor one shulde nat bragge and bost to do more than he may well atcheue. There be many, whiche with

their wordes flee theyr enmyes a great waye of, but when they se theyr enmye, they put on a sure breste plate and a gorget of a myle of lengthe. Plutarche wryteth, that whan Memnon made warre for Darius agaynste Alexander: he harde one of his souldyours crake and speake many yll wordes agaynst Alexander: wherfore he rapt hym on the pate with a jauelynge, sayenge: I hyred the to fyght agaynste Alexander, and not to crake and prate.

Otherwhyle sayth Quintus Curtius the couetousnes of glory, and insaciabie desire of fame, causeth, that we thynke nothing ouer moche or ouer hard. But Salust saith: Before a man enterprise any feate, he ought fyrst to counsayle: and after to go in hande there with nat heedlonge nor slowly.

¶ *Of hym that fell of a tre and brake
his rybbe. xxx.*

¶ THERE was a husbände man, whiche on a tyme as he clymbed a tree to gette downe the frute, felle and brake a rybbe in his syde. To comforte hym there came a very merye man, whiche as they talked to gether sayde, he wolde teache hym suche a rule, that if he wold folowe it, he shuld neuer falle from tree more. Marye, sayde the hurte

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man, I wolde ye hadde taught me that rule before I felle: neuer the lesse bycause it may happe to profyte me in tyme to come, lette me here what it is. Than the other sayd: Take hede, that thou go neuer downe faster, than thou wentest vp, but discende as softly as thou clymmest vp, and so thou shalt neuer fall.

By this tale ye may note, that abidyng and slownesse otherwhile are good and commendable, specially in those thynges, wherin speede and hastines, cause great hurte and damage. Seneca saythe: A sodayne thyng is nought.

¶ *Of the fryer that brayde in his sermon.*
xxxj.

¶ A FRYER that preached to the people on a tyme, wolde otherwhyle crie out a loude (as the maner of some fooles is) whiche brayenge dyd so moue a woman that stode herynge his sermone, that she wepte. He parceyuyng that, thought in his mynde her conscience being prycked with his wordes, had caused her to wepe. wherfore whan his sermon was done, he called the woman to hym, and asked what was the cause of her wepyng, and whether his wordes moued her to wepe or nat. Forsoth mayster (sayde

she) I am a poure wydowe: and whan myne husbande dyed, he lefte me but one asse, whiche gotte parte of my lyuyng, the which asse the wolues haue slayne: and nowe when I hard your hyghe voyce, I remembred my selve asse, for so he was wonte to braye bothe nyghte and daye. And this good mayster caused me to wepe. Thus the lewde brayer, rather than preacher, confuted with his folysshenes, wente his waye: which thinkyng for his brayenge lyke an asse to be reputed for the beste preacher, deserued well to here hym selfe to be compared to an asse.

For truely one to suppose hym selfe wyse
Is vnto folysshenes the very fyrste gryce.

¶ *The oration of the ambassadour sent to
Pope Urban.* xxxij.

¶ Out of the towne of Parusyn were sente vpon a tyme thre ambassadours vnto our holye father Pope Urban, whom they founde sycke in his bed. Before whose holynes one of the sayde ambassadours had a longe and a tedious oration, that he had devysed by the way: the whiche er it was ended, ryght sore anoyed the popes holynesse. whan he hadde all sayde, the pope asked:

Is there anye thyng elles? An other of the thre, perceyuyng howe greatly the ambagious tale greued the popes holynes to here it out, sayde, Moost holy father this is all the effecte, and if your holynes spede vs nat forthewith, my felowe shall telle his tale agayne. At whiche sayenge the pope laughed, and caused the ambassadours to be spedde incontinent.

By this tale one maye lerne, that superfluous wordes ought dilygently to be auoyded, specially where a matter is treated before an hygh prince.

¶ *Of the ambassadour sent to the prince Agis. xxxiiij.*

¶ NAT moch vnlike the forsayd tale Plutarche reciteth: that whan the ambassadour of the Abderitees had at laste ended a longe tale to the prynce Agis, he asked what answer he shulde make to them that sent him? Say vnto them (quod the prince) whan thou comest home, that all the longe tyme that thou didest dispende in tellynge thy tale I sate styll and harde the patiently.

¶ *The answer of Cleomenis to the Samiens
ambassadour. xxxiv.*

¶ PLUTARCHE rehersethe also, that what tyme an ambassadour, that was sente from the Samiens, had made a longe oration vnto Cleomenis, to perswade him to make warre to Polycrates, he answered the ambassadour on this maner of wyse: I remembre nat, what thou saydest in the begynnyng of thy tale, and therfore I vnderstand nat the myddis, and thy conclusion pleaseth me nat.

Wherby we may perceyue, that the noble wyse men loue fewe wordes. And as the rhetoriciens say: Amonge the vices of an oratoure, there is none more hurtefull than the superfluous heape of wordes.

¶ *Of the wyse man Piso, and his
seruant. xxxv.*

¶ A CERTAYN wise man called Piso, to auoyde greuous ianglynge, commaunded, that his seruauntes shulde saye nothinge, but answer to that that thei were demaunded, and no more. Vpon a daye the sayde Piso made a dyner, and sent a seruant to desire Clodius the Consull to come and dyne with him. Aboute the

houre of diner al the gwestes came saue Clodius, for whom they taryed tyll hit was almoste nyght, and euer sente to loke if he came. At laste Piso sayde to his seruaunt: Diddest thou byd the Consull come to dyner? yes truely sayde he. why cometh he nat than, quod Piso? Mary, quod the seruaunt, he sayde he wolde nat. wherfore toldest me nat so incontinent, quod Piso? Bycause, quod the seruaunt, ye dyd nat aske me.

By this tale seruauntes may lerne to kepe theyr maisters biddynge: but yet I aduise maysters therby to take hede, howe they make an iniunction.

¶ *Of the marchant that made a wager with his lorde. xxxvi.*

¶ A CERTAYNE marchaunt before his lorde, that he was subiecte vnto, amonge other thynges praysed his wyfe, and sayde, that he neuer harde her lette a *****. wherat the lorde meruailed, and sayd it was impossible: and so layde and ventred a souper with the marchant, that before thre monethes were ended, he shulde here her lette a ***** or twayne. On the morowe the lorde came to the marchaunt and borrowed fyfty crownes: the whiche he promysed trewely

to repay agayne within viij. dayes after. The marchaunt ryght sore agaynst his wyll lent it: and thoughtfully abode tyll the daye of payment was come: and than he wente to his lorde and requyred his moneye. The lorde, makynge as though he had hadde more nede than before: desyred the marchaunt to lende hym other fyfthe crownes: and promysed to paye all within a monethe. And all though the good man denyed hit longe, yet for feare lest he shulde lose the first somme, with moche grutchynge he lent hym the other fyfty crownes. And so went home to his house ryghte heuye and sorowfull in his mynde. Thus thynkynge and dreadynge diuers thynges, he passed many nyghtes awaye without slepe. And as he laye wakyng, he harde his wyfe nowe and than rappe out *****. At the monethes ende the lorde sente for the marchant, and asked him, if he neuer sythe harde his wyfe let ***** The marchant aknoweleginge his folye, answered thus: Forsothe syr if I shulde for euery ***** paye a souper, all my goodes and landes wolde nat suffice therto. After whiche answer the lorde payde the marchant his money, and the marchant payde the souper. Here by ye maye se, that many thynges passe by them that slepe, and it is an olde

sayenge: He that slepeth, byteth no body. By this tale ye may note also, that they, the whiche fortune swetelye enbraceth, take theyr reste and slepe soundely: And contrarye wyse, they that bene oppressed with aduersite, watche sorowefullye, whan they shulde slepe. This man, which for a very folisshe thing preysed his wyfe, afterwarde whan a lyttel care beganne to crepe aboute his stomacke, he perceiued that faute in her ryght great. The morall boke, called Cato, counsayleth vs to watche for the more parte: For moche slomber and slepe is the norisshinge of vice.

¶ *Of the friere that gaue scrowes agaynst the pestilence.* xxxvii.

¶ AMONGE the limitours in the cyte of Tiburtine, was a certayne friere, whiche vsed to preache about in the villages to men of the countrey: and for as moch as they greatlye suspecte that a plague of pestilence shulde come amonge them, he promysed eche of them a lytell scrowe: which he sayde was of suche a vertue, that who so euer bare hit hangynge aboute his necke xv. dayes, shulde nat dye of the pestilence. The folisshe people trustynge here vpon, euerye one after his power gaue him money

for a scrowe: and with a threde of a maydens spynninge they hanged hit aboute their neckes. But he charged them, that they shuld nat open it, tyll the xv. dayes ende: for if they did, he sayde, hit had no vertue. So whan the frire hadde gathered moche moneye, he wente his waye. Soone after (as the desyre of folkes is to knowe newes) the sayd scrowes were redde: in which was writen in Italian speche: *Donna si fili, et cadeti lo fuso, quando ti pieghi, tieni lo culo chiuso.* which is to saye in englysshe: woman if thou spynne, and thy spyndell falle awaye, whan thou stoupest to reache for him, hold thyne **** close. He sayde that this passed all the preceptes and medicines of the phisitions.

By whiche tale one may lerne, that all is nat gospell, that suche wanderers about saye, nor euerye worde to be beleued: For often tymes *Gelidus jacet anguis in herba.*

¶ *Of the phisition, that vsed to write bylles ouer eue.* xxxviiij.

¶ A CERTAYNE phisitian of Italy vsed ouer night to write for sondry diseasis diuers billes, called resceitz, and to put them in a bag al to gether: In the morning whan the vrins (as the custome is) were brought to

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him, and he desired to shewe some remedy: he wolde put his hande in to the bag, and at al auentures take oute a bille: And in takinge oute the bille he wolde say to him that came to seke remedye in their language: *Prega dio te la mandi bona.* That is to say: Praye God to sende the a good one.

By this tale ye may se, that miserable is their state whiche fortune must helpe and nat reason. Suche a phisitian on a tyme sayde to Pausanias: Thou aylest nothinge. No sayde he, I haue nat had to do with thy phisicke. And an other tyme a frende of his sayde: Syr ye ought not to blaine that phisitian: for his phisicke dyd you neuer hurte. Thou sayest trouthe, quod he: for if I hadde proued his phisicke, I shulde nat now haue been alyue. And ageyne to an other that sayde: Syr ye be an olde man, he answered: yea thou wert nat my phisitian. Suche maner of checkes are to lyttell for the leude foles, that wyll practise phisicke, before they knowe what longeth to theyr name.

¶ *Of him that wolde confesse him by writinge.* xxxix.

¶ THER was a yonge man on a tyme, which wrote a longe lybell of his synnes, whether he dyd hit for hypocrisy, folysshe-

nesse, or oblyuion I can not say : and whan he shulde confesse him, he gaue hit to the confessour to rede : whiche confessor beinge well lerned and experte in that busynes, parceyued hit wolde requyre a longe tyme to rede ouer : wherfore after a fewe wordes he sayde : I assoyle the frome all the synnes conteyned in this lybell : yea but what shall my penaunce be, quod the yonge man : No-thinge els sayde the confessour, but that thou shalte the space of a moneth rede this lybell ouer euery daye vii. tymes. And all thoughe he sayde it was impossyble for him to do, yet the confessour wolde nat chaunge his sentence. By which mery subtile answere he confuted the breble brable of the folysshe felowe.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that he that occupyeth this office, that is to saye a confessour, ought to be discrete, prudent, and well lernedde. This confessour knewe well the ordinaunce of holye churche : whiche wylleth confession to be made with the mouthe, and nat by wrytynge.

¶ *Of the hermite of Padowe.* xl.

¶ AN hermite of Padow, that was reputed for an holy man, vnder the semblaunce of confession, entyced many of the notablist

wyues of the towne vn to folye and lewednes. So at last, whan his offence was dyuulgate and knowen (for hypocrisy can nat longe be hid) he was taken by the prouost, and brought before the prince of Padowe, duke Francis the vii. of that name, whiche for his disporte sent for his secretarye, to wryte the womens names, that the hermyte had layen by. whan the hermyte had rehersed manye of the dukes seruantes wyues, and the secretarye meryly laughenge had writen them : he semed as he had al said. Be there any mo sayde the duke ? No forsothe said the hermite. Tel vs trouth quod the secretarie, who be mo, or els thou shalte be sharply punisshed. Than the hermyte sighinge said : Go to, write in thin owne wife amonge the number of the other. which saienge so sore greued the secretarye, that the penne felle out of his hande and the duke laughed ryght hartily : and sayde it was well done that he that with so great pleasure harde the fautes of other mennes wyues, shulde come in the same nombre.

By this ieste we may lerne, that one ought nat to reioyce at an others grefe or hurte : For lytell woteth a man what hangeth ouer his owne heed.

¶ *Of the Vplandisshe man, that sawe the kynge.* xli.

¶ AN vplandisshe man nourysshed in the woddes, came on a tyme to the citie, whanne all the stretes were full of people, and the common voyce amonge them was : The kynge cometh. This rurall manne moued with noueltie of that voyce, had great desyre to se, what that multitude houed to beholde. Sodaynly the kynge, with many nobuls and states before hym, came rydyng royally. Than the people all aboute stedfastly beheld the kynge and cryed aloude : God saue the kynge : God saue the kynge. This villayne herynge them crye so, sayde, O where is the kynge, where is the kynge? Than one shewynge hym the kynge sayde : yonder is he, that rydeth upon the goodly whyte horse. Is that the kynge, quod the villayne? what thou mockest me quod he, me thinke that is a man in a peynted garment.

By this tale ye maye perceyue (as Lycurgus proued by experience) that nourysshynge, good bryngynge vp, and exerceyse ben more apte to leade folke to humanite, and the doynge of honest thynges than

Nature her selfe. They for the mooste part are noble, free, and vertuous, whiche in their youthe bene well nourysshed vp, and vertuously endoctryned.

¶ *Of the courtier that bad the boy holde his horse. xlii.*

¶ A COURTIER on a tyme that alyghted of his horse at an Inde gate sayde to a boye that stode therby: Ho syr boye, holde my horse. The boye as he had ben aferde answered: O maister this is a fierce horse, is one able to holde hym? yes quod the courtier one may holde hym well inough: well quod the boye, if one be able inough, than I pray you holde hym your owne selfe.

¶ *Of the deceytfull scriuener. xliij.*

¶ A CERTAYNE scriuener, whiche hadde but a bare lyuyng by his crafte, imagyned howe he myghte gette money: So he came to a yonge man, and asked hym if he were payde x. li. whiche a certayne man, that was deade, borrowed and oughte to paye his father in tyme paste. The yonge manne sayde there was no suche duetye owynge in his fathers name, that he knewe

of. It is of trouthe, quod the scriuener : for here is the oblygacyon thereof, whiche I made my selfe. He prouoked the yonge manne so moche, that he gaue hym money for the oblygation, and before the mayre he required the duetie. His sonne that was named to be dettour, sayde playnely, that his father neuer borrowed money : for if he had, it wolde appere by his bokes, after the marchantes maner. And forth with he went to the scriuener and sayde to hym, that de was a false man to write a thing that neuer was done. Sonne, sayde the scriuener, thou wottest nat what was done that tyme : whan thy father borrowed that somme of money thou were nat borne : but he payde it agayne within thre monthes after, I made the quittance thereof my selfe : wherby thy father is discharged. So the yonge man was faine to gyue him money for the quittance. And whan he had shewed the quittance, he was discharged of that greuance. Thus by his faire fraude he scraped money from them bothe.

By this tale ye may se, that the children in this our tyme be very prudent to get money.

¶ *Of hym that sayde he beleued his wyfe
better than other, that she
was chaste. xliiij.*

¶ A CERTAYNE man, whose wyfe (as the voyce wente) was nat very chaste of her bodye : was warned of his frendes to loke better to the matter. The man wente home and sharpely rebuked his wyfe : and tolde her betwene them bothe, what his frendes had sayde. She knowynge that periurye was no greater offence than aduoury, with wepyng and sweryng defended her honestie ; and bare her husbände on hande, that they feyned those tales for enuye that they hadde to se them lyue so quietly. with those wordes her husbände was content and pleased. So yet an other tyme agayne, his frendes warned hym of his wyfe, and badde hym rebuke and chastice her. To whome he sayd : I pray you trouble me no more with suche wordes. Telle me, whether knoweth better my wiues fautes, you or she ? They sayde : She. And she (quod he) whom I beleue better than you all, sayth playnly, that ye lye.

This was well and wysely done : For one ought nat to gyue light credence to those thinges, wherin resteth perpetuall grefe of mynde.

¶ *Of hym that payde his dette with crienge
bea. xlv.*

¶ THERE was a man on a tyme, which toke as moche ware of a marchaunt, as drewe to fyftie li. and riottously playde and spente the same awaye within shorte space. So whanne the day of payement came, he hadde nother moneye nor ware to paye: wherfore he was arrested, and must come before the Justyce. whan he sawe there was none other remedye, but that he shulde be constrayned eyther to paye the dette, or els to go to prison: wherfore he went to a subtile man of lawe, and shewed to hym his matter, and desyred hym of his counsaile and helpe. what wylt thou gyue me (quod the man of lawe) if I rydde the of this dette? By my faythe said the dettour v. marke; and lo here it is redy, as sone as I am quitte, ye shall haue it. Good inough quod the man of lawe, but thou muste be ruled by my counsaile, and thus do. whan thou comest before the Justice, what som euer be sayd vnto the, loke that thou answere to nothing, but cry bea styl: and lette me alone with the reste. Content quod he.

So whan they were com before the Justice, he said to the dettour: doste thou

owe this marchant this somme of money or no? Bea quod he. what beste (quod the Justice) answer to thy plaint, or els thou wylte be condemned. Bea, quod he agayne. Than his man of lawe stode forth, and sayd: Sir this man is but an ideot, who wolde beleue that this marchaunt, whiche is both wyse and subtile, wolde truste this ideot, that can speke neuer a redy worde, of xl. peny worth of ware: and so with suche reasons he perswaded the Justice to caste the marchaunt in his owne action. So whan the sentence was gyuen, the man of lawe drewe the dettour asyde and said: Lo, howe sayst thou now? Haue not I done well for thee? Thou arte clere quitte of the dette that was demanded of the, wherfore giue me my money, and God be with the. Bea, quod he. what quod the laweer, thou nedest not to crie bea no longer, thy matter is dispatched, all is at a poynt, there resteth nothyng, but to gyue me my wages, that thou promysdest. Bea quod he agayne. I saye quod the man of lawe, crie bea no longer now, but gyue me my money. Bea quod he. Thus the man of lawe neyther for fayre nor foule coulde gette any other thinge of his client but Bea. wherfore all angerly he departed and went his waye.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that they whiche be the inuenteres and diuisers of fraude and disceit, ben often tymes therby deceyued them selfe. And he that hath hyd a snare to attrap an other with, hath hym selfe ben taken therin.

¶ *Of the woman that appeled fro kyng Philip to kyng Philippe.* xlvj.

¶ A WOMAN whiche gyltlesse on a tyme was condempned by kyng Philippe of Macedone, whan he was not sobre. wherfore she sayde I appele. whether quod the kyng: To kyng Philippe quod she: but that is whan he is more sobre and better aduysed. whiche sayenge caused the kyng to loke better on the matter, and to do her ryght.

This wryteth Val. Maximus. But Plutarche sayth: It was a man, and kyng Philip was halfe a slepe, whan he gaue sentence.

¶ *Of the olde woman, that prayde for the welfare of the tyrant Denise.* xlvij.

¶ WHAT tyme Denyse the tyranne raygned, for his cruelte and intollerable dealinge he was hated of all the cite of Syra-

cuse, and euery body wysshed his dethe, saue one olde woman, the whiche euery morning praid God to saue him in good life and helth. whan he vnderstode that that she so dyd, he meruailed greatly at her vnderdeserued beniuolence. wherfore he sente for her, and asked, why and howe he had deserued, that she prayde for hym? She answered and sayd: I do it nat with out a cause. For whan I was a mayde, we had a tyran raignyng ouer vs: whose death I greatly desyred, whan he was slayne, there succided an other yet more cruell than he: Out of whose gouernance to be also deliuered I thought it a hygh benifyte. The thyrde is thy selfe, that haste begon to raygne ouer vs more importunately than either of the other two. Thus fearynge leest whan thou arte gone, a worse shuld succede and reigne ouer vs, I praye God dayly to preserue the in helthe.

¶ *Of the phisitian Eumonus.* xlvij.

¶ A PHISITIAN called Eumonus told a sicke man, that laye in great payne, that he coulde nat scape, but he muste nedes dye of that disese. This sicke man within a whyle after, nat by the phisitians helpe, but by the wille of God, guerysshed and

was holle of his disease : howe be hit he was verye lowe and bare broughte. And as he walked forth on a daye he mette the same physitian : whiche doubtynge whether hit were the same sycke man or nat, sayd : Arte nat thou Gaius? yes truelye quod he. Arte thou alyue or deed sayde the phisitian? I am deed quod he. what doste thou here than, sayd the phisitian? By cause quod he, that I have experience of many thinges, God hath commanded me that I shulde come and take vp all the phisitians that I can get to him. which sayenge made Eumonus as pale as ashes for fere. Than Gaius sayd to him: Drede thou nat Eumonus, thoughe I sayd all phisitians: For there is no man that hath wytte, that wylle take the for one.

¶ *Of Socrates and his scoldinge wyfe.* xlix.

¶ LAERTIUS wryteth, that the wyse man Socrates had a coursed scoldinge wyfe, called Xantippe, the whiche on a day after she hadde all to chydde him powred a pysse pottle on his heed. He takynge all patiently sayde: Dyd nat I tell you, that whan I herde Xantippe thonder so fast, that it wolde rayne anone after.

Wherby ye maye se, that the wyser a

man is, the more pacience he taketh. The wyse poet Virgil sayth: All fortune by suffrance must be ouercome.

¶ *Of the phisitian that bare his paciente on honde, he had eaten an asse. l.*

¶ A PHISITIAN, which had but smalle lerning, vsed whan he came to viset his pacientes to touche the pulce, and if any appayred, he wolde lay the blame on the paciente and beare him on hande, that he did eate fygges, apples, or some other thinge that he forbade: and bicause the pacientes other whyle confessed the same: they thought he had ben a very connyng man. His seruante hadde great maruayle, howe he parceyued that: and desyred his mayster to tell hym, whether he knewe hit by touching of the pulce, or els by some other hygher knowlege. Than sayde his mayster, for the good seruice that thou haste done me, I will open to the this secrete point. whan I come in to the pacientes chamber, I loke al a bout: and if I spye in the flore shales, parynge of chese, of aples, or of peares, or any other scrappes: anone I coniecte, that the paciente hath eaten therof. And so to thende I wolde be blameles, I lay the faute on theyr mysdiettynge.

Nat longe after the same seruaunte toke on hym to practise physike: whiche in lyke maner blamed his pacientes: and sayde, that they kepte nat the diete, that he gaue them: and he bare them on hande that they yete some what, whereof he sawe the scrappes in the flore. On a tyme he cam to a poure man of the countre, and promysed to make him hole, if he wolde be gouerned after him: and so gaue him to drinke I wote nat what, and went his waye tyll an the morowe. whan he came agayne, he founde the man sicker than euer he was. The rude fole, nat knowinge the cause, behelde here an there aboute: and whan he coude se no scrappes, nor parynges, he was sore troubled in his mynde. So at the last he espied a saddel vnder the bed. Than said he all a loude, that he hadde at length parceyued, howe the sicke man empayred: He hath so excessiue passed diete (quod he) that I wonder he is nat deed. How so quod they? Marye quod he, ye haue made him to eate an holle asse: Lo, where the saddell lyethe yet vnder the bedde. For he thoughte the saddell had be lefte of the asse, as bones are of fleshe. For which folysshnes he was well laughed to skorne and mocked.

Thus as a good faythfull phisitian is worthy of greate honour : for truely of hym dependethe the greatest parte of mans helthe : so lyke wyse a folysshe and an vnlearned, that thynkethe to cure with wordes, that he ought to do with herbes, is nat onely worthy to be deryded and mocked, but also punysshed : for nothinge is more perillous.

¶ *Of the inholders wyfe and her ii.
louers. li.*

¶ NERE vnto Florence dwelled an inholder, whos wyfe was nat very dangerous of her tayle. Vpon a nyghte as she was a bed with one of her louers, there came a nother to have lyen with her. Whan she herde him come vp the ladder, she met him, and bade hym go thence, for she hadde no tyme than to fulfyll his pleasure. But for all her wordes he wolde nat go a waye, but styлле preaced to come in. So longe they stode chydinge, that the good man came vpon them, and asked them why they brauled so. The woman nat unprouyded of a deceytfull answeyre sayde : Syr this man wolde come in per force, to slee or myschiefe an other, that is fled into our

house for succoure: and hitherto I haue kepte him backe. whan he, that was within, herde her saye so, he began to plucke vp his harte and say, he wolde be a wreked on him withoute. And he that was withoute made a face, as he wolde kylle him that was within. The folysshe man her husbände, enquired the cause of theyr debate, and toke vpon him to sette them at one. And so the good sely man spake and made the pese betwene them both. yea and farther he gaue them a gallon of wyne: addyng to his wiues adouotry the losse of his wine.

¶ *Of him that healed franticke men.* lij.

¶ THERE dwelled a man in Italy, whiche vsed to heale men, that were franticke, on this maner. He had within his house a gutter, or a ditche full of water: wherin he wold put them, some to the middell legge, some to the knee, and some dypper, as they were madde. So one that was well amended, and wente aboute the house to do one thinge and other for his meate, as he stode on a tyme at the gate, lokinge in to the strete, he sawe a gentyll man ryde by with a great sorte of haukes and

houndes : the which he called to him and said: you gentyll man whither go ye? On huntynge, quod the gentyll man. what do you with all those kytes and dogges, quod he? They be haukes and houndes, quod the gentyll man. wherfore kepe you them, quod the other? For my pleasure, quod the gentyl man. what costeth it you a yere to kepe them, quod the other? xl. duckettes, quod the gentyll man.. And what do they profytte you, quod he? Foure duckettes quod the gentyll man. Gette the lyghtlye hense, quod the madde man: for if my mayster come and fynde the here: he wyll put the in to the gutter vp to the throte.

This tale toucheth suche yonge gentyll menne, that dispende ouer moche good on haukes, houndes, and other trifils.

¶ *Of hym that sayde he was not worthy to open the gate to the kynge.* liij.

¶ As a kynge of Englande hunted on a tyme in the countie of Kent, he hapte to come rydynge to a great gate: wherby stode a husbande man of the countrey, to whom the kynge sayd: Good felowe putte open the gate. The man perceyuyng he was the kynge, sayde: No and please your

grace, I am nat worthy: but I wyll go fetche mayster Couper, that dwelleth nat ij. myles hense, and he shal open to you the gate.

¶ *Of mayster Vauasour and Turpin his man.* liiij.

¶ MAYSTER Vauasour sometyme a iudge of Englande hadde a seruaunt with hym called Turpin: whiche had done hym seruyce many yeres, wherfore he came vnto his mayster on a tyme, and sayde to hym on this wyse: Syr I haue done you seruice longe, wherfore I pray you gyue me somewhat to helpe me in myn old age. Turpin, quod he, thou sayst trouthe, and hereon I haue thought many a tyme: I wyll tell the, what thou shalt do. Nowe shortly I must ride vp to London, and if thou wilt beare my costis thether: I wyll surely gyue the suche a thing, that shall be worth to the an hundred pounce. I am contente, quod Turpin. So all the waye as he rode Turpin payd his costis, tyll they came to theyr last lodginge: and there after souper he cam to his mayster and sayde: Sir I haue born your costes hitherto, as ye badde me: nowe I pray you let me se, what thyng hit is, that shulde be worthe an hundred pounce

to me. Dyd I promise the suche a thinge, quod his maister? ye forsoth, quod Turpin. Shewe me thy wrytinge, quod maister Vauasour. I haue none, sayde Turpin. Than thou arte lyke to haue nothinge sayde his maister. And lerne this at me: whan so euer thou makest a bargayne with a man, loke that thou take sure wrytynge, and be well ware howe thou makest a wrytynge to any man. This poynte hath vayled me an hundred pounce in my dayes: and so hit may the. whan Turpin sawe there was none other remedy, he helde him selfe contente. On the morowe Turpin taryed a lytelle behynde his mayster to reken with the hostes, where they laye: and of her he borrowed so moche money on his maysters skarlet cloke, as drewe to all the costes that they spent by the waye. Mayster Vauasour had nat ryden past ii. myle but that it began to rayne: wherfore he calledde for his cloke: his other seruauntes saide, Turpin was behinde and had hit with him. So they houedde vnder a tre tylle Turpin over toke them. Whan he was come mayster Vauasour all angerly sayde: Thou knaue, why comest thou nat aweye with my cloke. Syr and please you, quod Turpin, I haue layde hit to gage for your costes al the waye. why knaue, quod his mayster,

diddiste thou nat promyse to beare my charges to London. Dyd I quod Turpin? ye, quod his mayster that thou diddest. Let se, shew me your wrytinge therof quod Turpin. wherto his mayster I thinke answered but lytell.

¶ *Of hym that sought his wyfe against the streme.* lv.

¶ A MAN the whose wyfe, as she came ouer a bridg fell in to the ryuer and was drowned: wherfore he wente and sought for her vpward against the stream, wherat his neighbours, that wente with hym, maruayled, and sayde he dyd nought, he shulde go seke her downewarde with the streame. Naye quod he, I am sure I shall neuer fynde her that waye: For she was so waywarde and so contrary to euery thyng, whyle she lyuedde, that I knowe very well nowe she is deed, she wyll go a gaynste the streame.

¶ *Of him that at a skyrmyshe defended him with his feet.* lvi.

¶ A LUSTY yonge gentyll man of France that on a tyme was at a skyrmysshe, and defended him selfe valyantly with his

feet, came in to the courte, in to a chambre amonge ladies, with a goodly ringe vpon his fynger: to whom a fayre lady sayde: Syr, why weare ye that rynge vpon your fynger? wherfore aske you madame, quod he? Bycause (sayde she) your feet dyd you better seruice than your hands at the last skyrmysshe that ye were at.

By this tale yonge men may lerne to beare them well and valyantly for drede of reproche. Better it is with worshyp to dye than with shame to lyue: albe hit that Demosthenes sayde: He that fleethe cometh agayne to batayle.

¶ *Of him that wolde gyue a song for
his dyner.* lvij.

¶ THERE came a felowe on a tyme in to a tauerne, and called for meate. So whan he had well dyned: the tauerner came to reken and to haue his money: to whom the felowe sayde, he had no money, but I wyll, quod he, contente you with songes. Naye quod the tauerner I nede no songes, I must haue money. whye, quod the felowe, if I synge a songe to your pleasure, will ye nat then be contente? yes quod the tauerner. So he began and songe thre or four balades, and asked if he were pleased? No sayde the

tauerner. Than he opened his pourse, and beganne to synge thus:

Whan you haue dyned make no delaye
But paye your oste, and go your waye.

Dothe this songe please you, quod he? yes marye sayd the tauerner this pleaseth me well. Than, as couenant was (quod the felowe) ye be paid for your vitaile. And so he departed and wente his waye.

This tale sheweth, that a man may be to hastye in makynge of a bargayne and couenantyng: and therfore a man ought to take good hede, what he sayth: for one worde may bynde a man to great inconuenience, if the matter be weighty.

¶ *Of the foole that thought hym selfe deed. lviij.*

¶ THERE was a felowe dwellynge at Florence, called Nigniaca, whiche was nat verye wyse nor all a foole, but merye and iocunde. A sorte of yonge men for to laughe and pastyme, appoynted to gether, to make him beleue that he was sycke. So whan they were agreed, howe they wolde do, one of them mette hym in the mornyng, as he came out of his house, and bad him good morowe, and than asked him if he were nat yl at ease? No quod the foole,

I ayle nothing I thanke God. By my faith ye haue a sickely pale colour, quod the other, and wente his waye.

Anone after an other of them mette hym, and asked hym if he had nat an ague, for your face and colour (quod he) sheweth that ye be very sycke. Than the foole beganne a lyttel to doubt, whether he were sycke or no, for he half beleued, that they said trouth. whan he had gone a lytel farther, the thyrde man mette him and sayde: Jesu manne, what do you out of your bed? ye loke as ye would nat lyue an houre to an ende. Nowe he doubted greatly, and thought verily in his mynde, that he had hadde some sharpe ague: wherfore he stode styll and wolde go no further. And as he stode the fourth man came, and sayde: Jesu man, what dost thou here, and arte so sycke? Gette thee home to thy bedde: for I parceyue thou canst nat lyue an houre to an ende. Than the foles heart began to feynte, and prayde this laste man that came to hym, to helpe hym home: yes quod he, I wyll do as moche for the as for myn owne brother. So home he brought hym, and layde hym in his bed: and than he fared with hym selfe, as thoughe he wolde gyue vp the gooste. Forth with came the other

felowes, and saide he hadde well done to lay hym in his bedde. Anone after came one, whiche toke on hym to be a phisitian: whyche touchynge the pulse, sayde the malady was so vehement, that he coude nat lyue an houre. So they standynge aboute the bedde, said one to an other: Nowe he gothe his waye: for his speche and syght fayle him: by and by he wyll yelde up the goste. Therfore let vs close his eyes, and lay his hands a crosse, and cary hym forth to be buryed. And than they sayde lamentynge one to an other: O what a losse haue we of this good felowe our frende?

The foole laye styлле, as one were deade: yea and thought in his mynde, that he was deade in dede. So they layde him on a bere, and caryed hym through the cite. And whan any body asked them what they caryed, they sayde the corps of Nigniaca to his graue. And euer as they went people drew about them. Among the prece ther was a tauerners boy, the whiche whan he herde that it was the cors of Nigniaca, he said to them: O what a vile bestly knaue, and what a strong thefe is deed, by the masse he was well worthy to haue ben hanged longe ago. whan the fole harde those wordes, he put out his heed and

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sayd: I wys hore son, if I were alyue now, as I am deed, I wolde proue the a false lyer to thy face. They that caryed him began to laugh so hartilye, that they sette downe the bere, and went theyr waye.

By this tale ye maye se, what the perswasion of many doth. Certaynly he is very wyse, that is not inclined to foly, if he be stered therevnto by a multitude. yet sapience is founde in fewe persones: and they be lyghtly olde sobre men.

¶ *Of the olde man and his sonne that brought his asse to the towne to sylle. lix.*

¶ AN olde man on a tyme, and a lyttell boye his sonne droue a litel asse before them, whiche he purposed to sylle at the markette towne that they went to. And bicause he so dyd, the folkes that wrought by the way syde, blamed hym. wherfore he set vp his sonne, and went hym selfe on fote. Other that sawe that, called hym foole, by cause he lette the yonge boye ryde, and he beynge so aged to goo a foote. Than he toke downe the boye, and lepte vp, and rode hym selfe. whanne he hadde rydden a lyttell waye, he harde other that blamed hym, bycause he made the lyttell yonge

boye ronne after as a seruaunte, and he his father to ryde. Than he sette vppe the boye behynde hym, and so rode forth.

Anone he mette with other, that asked hym if the asse were his owne: By whiche wordes he coniected, that he did nat wel so to ouercharge the lyttell sely asse, that vneth was able to beare one. Thus he troubled with their dyuers and manyfolde opinions: whiche neither with his asse vacant, nor he alone, nor his sonne alone, nor bothe to gether rydyng at ones on the asse, coulede passe forth with out detraction and blame: wherfore at last he bounde the asse feet to gether, and put through a staffe, and so he and his sonne began to beare the asse betwene them on their shulders to the towne. The nouelte of whiche syght caused euery body to laughe and blame the folysshenes of them both. The sely olde man was so sore agreued, that as he sat and rested hym on a ryuers syde, he threwe his asse in to the water. And so whan he had drowned his asse, he tourned home agayne. Thus the good man desyrynge to please euerye bodye, contentynge none at all, loste his asse.

By this tale appereth playnelye, that they whiche commyt them selfe to the opinion of the common people, ben oppressed with

great myserye and seruage : For how is it possible to please all, whan euery man hath a dyuers opinion, and dyuerslye iudgeth ? And that was well knowen to the poet, whan he sayde,

Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.

And as Cicero, Persius, and Flaccus say : As many men so many myndes : as many heedes so many wyttes. That, that pleaseth one, displeaseth an other : Fewe alowe that that they loue nat : and that that a man aloweth, he thynketh good. Therefore the beste is, that euery man lyue well, as a good Christen man shulde, and care nat for the wayne wordes, and ianglynge of the people. For bablynge (as Plutarchus sayth) is a greuous disease, and hard to be remedied. For that that shulde heale it (which is wordes of wisdom) cureth them that harkeneth there vnto : but pratlers wille here none but them selfe.

¶ *Of him that sought his asse and rode
on his backe. lx.*

¶ THERE was in the countrey of Florence an husbande man, that vsed to carye corne to the market vpon many lytell asses. On a time as he came home warde, bycause he was somewhat werye, to ease him selfe, he

rode on one the strongest of them. And as he rode dryuinge his asses before him, he counted them, and forgot the asse that he rode on : wherfore he thought still that he lacked one. Thus sore troubled in his mynde, he bad his wyfe set vp his asses, and hastily rode agayne backe to the towne vii. myles of, to seke the asse, that he rode on. He asked of euery body that he met, if they sawe an asse straye alone. whan he herde euery bodye saye they sawe none suche, makynge great sorowe he retourned home agayne. At laste whan he was alyghted his wyfe parceyued and shewedde hym playnlye, that the asse, that he rode on, was the same that he soughte and made suche sorowe fore.

This ieste may be well applied vnto suche as note the defautes, that they lyghtly spy in other, and take none hede, nor can nat se what ils they haue or bene spotted with them selfe.

¶ *The answer of Fabius to Liuius.* lxi.

¶ **WHAN** Anniball the capitayne of Carthage had conquered Tarent (a towne pertainyng to the Romayns) all saue the castell, and had lefte a garnison to kepe it, whan the worthy Romayne Fabius had

knowelege therof, he pryuely conducted an armye thether, and got the towne agayne, and pyllled it. Than M. Liuius that kepte the castell with a garnison, sayde bostynge him selfe, that Fabius had gotte the towne through him and his helpe. you saye trouthe, quod Fabius, for if you had nat loste the towne, I shulde neuer haue gotte hit.

¶ *The answer of Poltis, the kynge of Thrace, to the Troyan embassadours. lxii.*

¶ PLUTARCHE lyke wyse reherseth, that duryng the warre of Troy, the grekes and also the troians sente ambassadours to a kynge of Thrace calledde Poltis, whiche kynge answered th ambassadours and bade, that Alexandre shulde delyuer agayne Helayne (for she was the cause of the warre) and he wolde gyue him ii. fayre wyues for her.

¶ *The wyse answer of Hanibal to kyng Antiochus, concerninge his ryche armye. lxiiij.*

¶ WHAN kynge Antiochus had prepared to make warre to the Romayns, he caused his armye to mustre before Anniball. So they shewed and mustred both horse men and

fote men : of whose ryche and sumptuous armour and apparaile, al the felde glistred and shone. How saye you quod the kynge to Hanibal, is nat this armye sufficient ynough for the Romainys? yes quod Hanibal, and though they were the moste couetous of all the worlde. The king mente one thing, and he answerd an other.

¶ *The wordes of Popilius the Romain
embassadour to Antiochus
the kinge. lxiiij.*

¶ ONE C. Popilius was sente vpon a tyme by the Senatours of Rome, with letters to Antiochus the kynge of Syrre, wherein the kyng was commaunded to calle his armye backe agayne oute of Aegipte : and that he shulde suffer the chyldren of Ptolome and theyr realme in peace. As th embassadour came by the kinges tentes and paulyons, Antiochus a good waye of saluted him, but he did nat salute the kynge agayne, but de-lyuered to him his letters. whan the kynge hadde redde the letters, he sayde, that he muste take counsayle, before he made him an answer. Popilius with a rod that he had in his hande made a compace about the kinge, and sayde: Euen here standinge take counsayle and make me an answer. Euery man hadde meruayle at the grauite,

and stout stomacke of the man. And whan Antyochns was contente to do as the Romayns wolde haue hym: Than Popilius both saluted and embraced him.

¶ *Of him that loued the marchants wyfe.* lxxv.

¶ **T**HER was a yonge lusty gentyll man vpon a tyme that was ryght amorous, and loued a certayne merchauntes wyfe oute of all measure: in so moche that he folowed her to the churche and other places, but he durste neuer speake. At the laste he with two or thre of his felowes folowed her to a fryers: where he hadde tyme and place conueniente to speake thre or four wordes to her that he before had deuysed. So one of his felowes sayde, go now speake to her. But he stode styll all astonyed. They egged and prouoked him so moche, that at last he wente vnto her, and clene forgettynge those wordes, that he had thoughte to haue spoken he said to her on this wise: Maistres I am your owne lytel seruante. wherat she smyled and sayd: Syr I nede nat your seruyce: for I haue seruantes inow at home, that can brusshe, sponge, wasshe, and do all my other busines. The whiche answer, and folysshe basshement of the gentyl man, caused his felowes to laugh

hartelye. This maner of folye was well knownen to the poet, whan he sayde :

Incipit affari, mediaque in voce resistit.

Folysshe loue maketh folkes astonied
And eke to raue without remembrance
Whan they shulde speake, they bene abashed
And of theyr wordes can make none vtterance
Nor be so hardye them selfe to auance
What tyme they se of her the swete face
Of whom the loue theyr hartes doth embrace.

¶ *Of the woman that couerd her heed and shewed her taile.* lxvi.

¶ As a woman that for a certayne impedi-
mente had shaued her heed sat in her house
bare heed, one of her neighbours called her
forth hastely in to the strete, and for haste
she forgotte to putte on her kercheffe. whan
her neighbour sawe her so she blamed her
for cominge abrode bare heed : wherfore
she whypte vp her clothes ouer her heed.
and so to couer her hed she shewed her
***. They that stode by, beganne to laugh
at her folysshenes, whiche to hyde a lytell
faute shewed a greater.

This tale touchethe them, that wolde
couer a small offence with a greater
wyckednesse, and as the prouerbe saythe :
Stomble at a strawe, and leape ouer a blocke.

¶ *Howe Alexander was monysshed to slee-
the fyrste that he mette.* lxvij.

¶ WHAN great Alexander wold entre in to

Perse lande with his armye, he counsayled with Apollo of his good spede: and by lotte he was warned, that he shulde commaunde to slee the fyrst that he mette, whan he issued out at a gate. Perchaunce the fyrste that he mette, was a man dryuyng an asse before hym. Incontinent the kyng commaunded to take and put hym to dethe. whan the poore man sawe that they wolde slee him, he said: what haue I done: Shall I that am an innocent be putte to deathe? Alexander to excuse his dede, sayde: He was warned by diuine monition to commaund to slee the fyrste that he mette comynge out at that gate. If it be so myghty kyng (quod the man) than the lotte dyuine hath ordeyned an other to suffre this deth and not me: For the lytel asse, that I droue before me, mette you fyrste.

Which subtyl sayenge greatly pleased Alexander: for elles he had done amysse: and so he caused the beaste to be slayne.

By this tale one may note, that it is better sometyme to be laste than fyrste.

¶ *Howe the cite of Lamsac was saved from destruction.* lxviij.

¶ As great Alexander on a tyme was fully purposed to haue vtterly destroyed a great cite, called Lamsac, he sawe his mayster

Anaximenes come towarde him without the walles: and bicause the kynge perceyued manifestlye, that he came to entreate hym for the cite, he sware a great othe, that he wolde nat do, that that he came to desyre hym fore. Than Anaximenes sayde: Sir I desyre your grace, that this same cite Lampsac may be vtterly distroyed. Through which sage and subtile sayeng the noble auncient citie was saued from ruyne and destruction.

¶ *Howe Demosthenes defended a mayde.* lxix.

¶ THERE were two men on a time, the whiche lefte a great somme of money in kepyng with a maiden, on this condition, that she shulde nat delyuer hit agayne, excepte they came bothe to gether for hit. Nat lang after one of them cam to hir mornyngly arayde, and sayde that his fellowe was deed, and so required the money, and she delyuered it to hym. Shortly after came the tother man, and required to haue the moneye that was lefte with her in kepyng. The maiden was than so sorowfull, both for lacke of the money, and for one to defende her cause, that she thought to hange her selfe. But Demosthenes that excellent oratour spake for her and sayd:

Sir this mayden is redy to quite her fidelite, and to deliuer agayne the money, that was lefte with her in kepyng, so that thou wylt brynge thy felowe with the to receyue it. But that he coude nat do.

¶ *Of him that desyred to be made a gentyl man.* lxx.

¶ THERE was a rude clubbysshe felowe, that longe had serued the duke of Orliance, wherfore he cam on a tyme to the duke, and desired to be made a gentyll man. To whom the duke answered: In good feyth I may well make the ryche, but as for gentyl man I can neuer make the.

By which wordes appereth that goodes and riches do not make a gentyl man, but noble and vertuous conditions to.

¶ *Of the gentyll man and his shrewde wyfe.* lxxi.

¶ THERE was a certayne gentyll man, that had a cursed chydynge wyfe, that wente euery day, and complayned on hym to a religious man, the whiche religious man toke vpon hym by weye of confession to reconcile and accorde them to gether: and the gentyll man was very well contente, that he

so shulde do, and came to him therfore. whan the gentyll man was come, the religious man badde hym shewe his offences and trespaces. No, quod the gentyll man that nedeth nat: For I knowe verye well my wyfe hath shewed vnto you all the offences that euer I dyd, and moche more.

¶ *Of the two yonge men that rode to Walsyngham. lxxij.*

¶ ONE John Roynoldes rode oute of London vpon a tyme towarde walsyngham, in company of a yonge man of the same cite, that hadde nat moche ben acostumed to ryde. So they came to an Inne, where as great companye was lodged. And in the mornynge whan euery man made hym redy to ryde, and some were on horsebacke setting forwarde, John Roynoldes founde his companion, syttyng in a browne study at the Inne gate: to whom he sayd: For shame man how syttest thou, why doste thou nat make the redy to horsebacke, that we myght sette forwarde with companye: I tary (quod he) for a good cause. For what cause, quod Roynoldes? Marye (quod he) here be so many horses, that I can nat telle whiche is myne owne amonge the other, And I knowe well, whan euery man is riden

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and gone, the horse that remaineth behynde must nedes be myn.

¶ *Of the yonge man of Bruges, and his spouse.* lxxij.

¶ A YONGE man of Bruges, that was betrouthed to a fayre mayden, came on a tyme, whan her mother was out of the way, and had to do with her. whan her mother was come in, anone she perceyued by her doughters chere, what she had done, wherfore she was so sore displesed, that she sewed a diuorse, and wolde in no wyse suffre that the yonge man shulde marye her daughter.

Nat longe after the same yonge man was maryed to an other mayden of the same parysshe. And as he and his wyfe satte talkynge on a tyme of the forsayde dammusell, to whome he was betrouthed, he fell in a nyce laughyng. wherat laugh ye quod his wyfe? It chaunced on a tyme (quod he) that she and I dydde suche a thyng together, and she tolde hit to her mother. Therin (quod his wyfe) she playde the foole: A seruante of my fathers playde that game with me an hundred tymes, and yet I neuer tolde my mother. whan he herde her saye so, he lefte his nyce laughynge.

¶ *Of hym that made as he hadde ben a chaste lyuer. lxxiiij.*

¶ A FELOWE that toke vpon him, as he had ben the moste chaste and beste disposed man lyuinge, was by one of his felowes on a tyme taken in aduoutry: and sharply rebuked for it, bycause he prated so moche of chastite, and yet was taken in the same faute. To whom he answerde againe: O fool doste thou thinke that I did hit for bodely pleasure? No no: I dyd it but onely to subdue my flesshe, and to purge my reynes.

Wherby ye may perceyue, that of all other dissemblynge hipocrytes are the worste.

¶ *Of hym that the olde roode fell upon. lxxv.*

¶ As a man kneled vpon a tyme prayenge before an olde rode, the rode felle downe on him and brak his hede: wherfore he wolde come no more in the churche halfe a yere after. At lengthe by the prouocation of his nighbours, he cam to the churche agayne. And bycause he sawe his nighbours knele before the same rode, he kneled downe lyke wyse and sayde thus: well I may cappe and knele to the, but thou shalte neuer haue myn harte agayne as long as I lyue.

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By whiche tale appereth, that by gentyll and courtesye entreatinge mens myndes ben obteyned. For though the people cappe and knele to one in highe authorite, yet lyttell whoteth he, what they thynke.

¶ *Of the wydow that wolde nat wedde for bodily pleasure.* lxxvi.

¶ THERE was a ryche wydowe, whiche desyredde a gossyp of hers, that she wold get her an husband: nat for the nyce playe quod she, but to th entente he may kepe my goodes to gether, whiche is an harde thinge for me to do, beynge alone woman. Her gossyp whiche vnderstode her conceyte, promysed her so to do. Aboute iij. or iiij. dayes after she came to her agayne, and sayde: Gossyp, I haue founde an husbände for you that is a prudente, a ware, and a wordlye wyse man, but he lacketh his priuey members: wherof ye force nat. Go to the dyuell with that husbände (quod the wydowe) for though that I desyre nat the nyce playe: yet I wyll that myne husbände shall haue that, where with we may be reconciled, if we falle at variance.

¶ *Of the couetous ambassodour, that wolde here no musike.* lxxvij.

¶ WHEN a couetous man on a time was come vnto a certain cite, whither he was

sent as ambassadour for his contrey, anon the mynstrels of the cite came to him to fil his eares with swete din, to thintente he shuld fyl their purses with money. But he perceyuyng that, bad one of his seruantes go and telle them, that he coude nat than intende to here their musicke, but he muste demene great sorow, for his mother was deed. So the minstrels disappointed of theyr purpose, all sadlye went theyr waye. And whan a worshipfull man of the cite, that was his frende, herd tell of his mourning, he came to visete and comforte him. And so in talkyng together he asked, howe longe a go it was that his mother deceased? Truelye (quod he) hit is xl. yere a go. Than his frende, vnderstandinge his subtilte, beganne to laughe hartely.

This tale is aplied to the couetous men, whiche by al crafte and meanes study to kepe and encrease theyr money and substance. Agaynst which vyce, many thinges ben wryten. As farre (sayth one) is that frome a couetous man, that he hath, as that he hath nat. And Diogenes calleth couetousnes, the heed of al yuels. And saynt Hieronymy calleth couetousnes the rote of all yuels. And for an example, the tale folowinge shall be of couetousnes.

¶ *How Denise the tyrant serued a
couetous man. lxxviij.*

¶ It was shewed to Denise the tyran, that a couetous man of the cite had hyd a great some of money in the grounde, and lyued moste wretchedly: wherfore he sente for the man, and commaunded him to go dyg vp the money, and so to deliuer it vnto hym. The man obeyed, and delyuered vnto the tyran all the golde and treasure that he hadde, save a small some, that he priuelye kepte a syde: where with he wente in to an other cite, and forsoke Syracuse: and there bought a lytell lande, where vpon he lyued. whan the tyran vnderstode that he hadde so done, he sent for him agayne. And whan he was come, the tyran sayde to him: Syth thou haste lerned nowe to vse well thy goodes, and nat to kepe them vnprofitably, I wyll restore them all to the agayne. And so he dyd.

¶ *Of the olde man, that quengered the boy
oute of the apletree with stones. lxxix.*

¶ As an olde man walked on a tyme in his orcherd he loked vp, and sawe a boye sytte

in a tree stealyng his apples: whom he entreated with fayre wordes to come downe, and let his apples alone. And whan the olde man sawe, that the boye cared nat for him, by cause of his age, and set noughte by his wordes, he sayde: I haue harde saye, that nat onlye in wordes, but also in herbes shulde be greatte vertue: wherfore he plucked up herbes, and began to throwe them at the boye, wherat the boye laughed hartelye, and thought that the olde man hadde ben mad, to thynke to driue hym out of the tree with castinge of herbes. Than the olde man sayde: well seyng that nother wordes nor herbes haue no vertue agaynste the stealer of my goodes: I wylle proue what stones wylle do, in whiche I haue harde men saye, is great vertue: and so he gathered his lappe full of stones, and threwe them at the boye, and compelled hym to come downe, and renne awaye.

This tale sheweth, that they that bene wyse proue many wayes, before they arme them.

¶ *Of the ryche man that wolde not haue a glyster.* lxxx.

¶ THERE was a certayn riche man on a tyme, whiche felle sycke: to the whose curyng

came many phisitions (for flyes by heapes flee to honye). Amonge them all there was one that sayde: that he muste nedes take a glyster, if he wolde be holle. whan the sicke man; that was nat envred with that medicine, harde hym saye so, he sayde in a great furye: Out a dores with those phisitions they be madde: For where as my payne is in my heed, they wolde heale me in myne ****.

This fable sheweth that holsom thynges to them that lacke knowlege and experyence, seme hurtfull.

¶ *Of hym that feyned hym selfe deed to proue what his wyfe wolde do. lxxxi.*

¶ A YONGE married man on a time to proue, to here, and to se what his wyfe wolde do, if he were deed, came in to his house, whyle his wyfe was forthe wasshyng of clothes, and layd hym downe in the floore, as he had ben deed. whan his wyfe came in, and sawe hym lye so, she thought he had ben deed in dede: wherfore she stode euen styll: and deuysed with her selfe whether was better to bewaile his dethe forth with, or els to dyne fyrste, for she had eate no meate of all the day. All other thinges consydered she determined to dyne

fyrste. So she cut a coloppe of baken, and broyled it on the coles, and began to eate theron a pace, she was so hungrye, that she toke no hede of drynke. At laste the saltenes of the meate made her to thyrste so sore, that she muste nedes drynke. So as she toke the potte in her hande, and was goynge downe into her seller to drawe drynke, sodaynely came one of her neyghbours for a cole a fyre. wherfore she stepped backe quickly, and though she was right thyrsty, yet she sette the potte a syde, and as her husbände had than fallen downe deed, she beganne to wepe, and with many lamentable wordes to bewayle his dethe. which wepynge and waylyng, and sodaine dethe of her husbände, caused all the neyghbours to come thyther. The man laye styll in the floore, and so helde his brethe, and closed his eies, that he semed for to be certayne deade. At laste whanne he thought he had made pastyme inough, and herynge his wyfe saye thus : Alas dere husbände, what shall I do nowe? He loked vp and sayde: Full yll my swete wyfe, excepte ye go quykely and drynke. wherwith they al from wepyng, tourned to laughyng, specially whan they vnderstode the matter, and the cause of her thyrste.

Wherby ye may se, that nat without a good skyl the poete sayde :

Ut fierent oculos erudiere suos.

¶ *Of the poure man, into whose house theues brake by nyghte. lxxxij.*

¶ THERE was a poore man on a tyme, the whiche vnto theues, that brake into his house on nyght, he sayde on this wyse. Syrs I maruayle, that ye thynke to fynde any thyng here by nyght, for I ensure you I can fynd nothing, whan it is brode day.

By this tale appereth playnly
That pouerte is a welthy mysery.

¶ *Of hym that shulde haue ben hanged for his scoffynge. lxxxiiij.*

¶ THERE was a mery felowe in hygh Almayn, the whiche with his scoffynge and iestyng had so moche displeased a great lorde of the countreye, that he thretned to hang hym, if euer he coude take hym in his countrey. Nat longe after this lordes seruantes toke hym, and hanged he shulde be. whanne he sawe there was no remedy but that he shulde dye, he sayde: My lorde, I muste nedes suffre dethe, whiche I knowe I haue wel deserued: But yet I beseke you

graunte me one petition for my soule helthe. The lorde, at the instaunce of the people that stode aboute, so it dydde not concerne his lyfe, was contente to graunte it hym. Than the felowe sayde: I desyre you my lorde, that after I am hanged, to come iii. mornynge fresshe and fastynge, and kysse me on the bare ****. where vnto the lorde answered: The deuyll kysse thyne ****: and so let hym go.

¶ *Of hym that had his goose stole.* lxxxiv.

¶ A MAN that had a goose stoole from hym, went and complayned to the curate, and desyred hym to do so moche as helpe that he had his goose again. The curate sayde he wolde. So on sonday the curate as though he wolde curse, went vp in to the pulpit, and bade euery body syt downe: So whan they were set, he said: why sit ye nat downe? we be set al redy, quod they. Naye (quod the curate) he that dyd stele the goose sitteth nat, yes that I do, quod he, Sayeste thou that, quod the curate? I charge the on peyne of cursyng, to bryng the goose home ageyn.

¶ *Of the begger that sayd he was kyn to kyng Philip of Macedone.* lxxxv.

¶ THERE came a begger to kyng Philip of

Macedone on a tyme, and prayde the kyng to gyve hym some what, and farther he sayde he was his kynse man. And whan the kyng asked hym which way, he answered and sayde, howe they came bothe of Adam. Than the kynge commanded to gyue hym an almes. whan the begger sawe it was but a small pece of moneye, he sayde, that was nat a semely gyfte for a kynge. The kynge answered: If I shuld gyue euery manne so moche, that is my kynse manne lyke as thou arte: I shulde leaue nothyng for my selfe.

¶ *Of Dantes answere to the iester.* lxxxvi.

¶ DANTES the poete dwelled a whyle with Can the prince de la Scale: with whome also dwelled an other Florentyne, that hadde neyther lernynge nor prudence, and was a man mete for nothyng, but to scoffe and ieste: but yet with his mery toyes, he so moued the sayd Can, that he dydde greatly enryche hym. And bycause Dantes dispised his folysshenes, this scoffer said to hym: How cometh it Dantes, that thou art holde so wyse and so well lerned, and yet arte poore and nedy? I am an vnlearned man and am an ignorant fole, and yet I am farre richer than thou art. To whom Dantes answered: If I may fynde a lorde

lyke and conformable to my maners, as thou haste founde to thyn: he wyll lyke wyse make me ryche.

¶ *Of hym that had sore eyes.* lxxxviij.

¶ ONE that had sore eies, was warned of the phisitian, that he shulde in any wyse forbear drinking or els lose his eies: To whom he sayd: It is more pleasure for me, to lose myne eies with drinkyng, than to kepe them for wormes to eate them oute.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that it auayleth nat to warne some for theyre owne profytte.

¶ *Of the olde woman that had sore eyes.*
lxxxviij.

¶ THERE was an olde woman the whiche bargayned with a surgean to heale her sore eyes: and whanne he hadde made her eies hole, and that she sawe better she couenaunted that he shulde be payde his moneye, and not before. So he layde a medycyne to her eyes, that shulde not be taken awaye the space of v. dayes. In whiche tyme she myghte nat loke vppe. Euery daye, whan he came to dresse her, he bare awaye some what of her house holde stouffe, table

clothes candelstickes, and disshes : He lefte no thinge, that he coulede carye clene. So whan her eies were hole, she loked vp, and sawe that her householde stouffe was caryede awaye, she sayde to the surgian, that came and required his money for his labour : Syr my promise was to pay you, whan ye made me se better than I did before : That is trouth, quod he. Mary, quod she, but I se worse nowe than I did. Before ye layde medecins to myn eies, I saw moche fayre stouffe in myn house, and now I se nothinge at all.

¶ *Of hym that had the custodi of a warde. lxxxix.*

¶ A CERTAYN man, that had the custody of a ward and his goodes, and in shorte space had spented all awaye : was by the governour of the cite commanded to bring in his bookes of *Introitus et exitus*, that is to saye, of entraunce and layenge oute : and to gyue accompte of the Orphlins goodes. So whan he came, he shewed fyrste his mouthe, and sayde Here it wente in : and after he shewed vp his ****, and sayde : Here hit wente out : and other bookes of *Introitus et exitus* I haue none.

¶ *Of the excellent paynter, that had foule children. xc.*

¶ THERE was a peinter in Rome that was an excellent counnyng man : and bycause he had foule children, One sayde to him : By my feyth I maruayle that you paynte so goodelye, and gette so foule chyldren : yea, quod the peynter, I make my chyldren in the darke, and I peynte those fygyres by daye lyght.

¶ *Of the scoffer that made a man a south sayer. xci.*

¶ THERE was a mery scoffynge felowe on a tyme, the whiche toke on him to teach a man to be a south sayer : whan they were agreedde, what he shulde haue for his labour : the scoffer sayd to the man holde, eate this rounde pellet, and I warant thou shalte be a south sayer. The man toke and put it in his mouth, and began to champe theron, but it sauered so ill, that he spyt it out forth with, and said : Phy, this pellet that thou gyueste me to eate, sauereth all of a ***** : Thou sayst trouth (quod the scoffer) Nowe thou art a south sayer, and therefore paye me my money.

¶ *Of the marchaunt of Florence called Charles.* xcij.

¶ A MARCHAUNT of Florence called Charles, came frome Auignone to Rome : And as he sate at souper with a great company, one asked him how the Florentins at Auignone fared : he sayde they were merye and gladde. For they that dwelle there a yere (quod he) be as men that were franticke and out of theyr myndes. Than an other that sate at souper with them asked this Charles, how longe he had dwelled there. He answered vi. monethes. Charles (quod he that asked him the question) thou haste a great wytte : For hit, that other be about xii. monethes, thou hast fulfilled in halfe a yere.

¶ *Of the chesshire man called Eulyn.* xcij.

¶ THER dwelled a man in Chesshyre called Eulyn, whiche vsed to go to the towne many tymes, and there he wolde sytte drynkyng tyl xii. of the clocke at nyghte, and than go home. So on a tyme he caryed a lyttel boye his sonne on his shulder with him, and whan the chylde fell a slepe

about ix. of the clocke, the ale wyfe brought him to bed with her chyl dren. At midnyghte Eulyn wente home, and thought no more on his chylde. Assone as he came home his wyfe asked for her chyl d. whan she spake of the chylde he loked on his shulder, and whan he saw he was not ther, he said he wist nat where he was. Out vpon the horson (quod she) thou hast let mi child fal in to the water (for he passed ouer the water of Dee at a brige) Thou list hore (quod he) for if he had fallen in to the water, I shuld haue hard him plump.

¶ *Of him that desired to be set vpon the pillori.* xciv.

¶ THERE were iij. loyttering felowes fell in companye on a tyme: the whiche wente so longe to gether tylle all theyr money was spente. whan their money was gone, one of them sayd: what shal we do now? By my faith (quod an other) if I might come where preace of people were, I coude get moneye inough for vs. And I (quod the iij.) can assemble people to gether lyghtly. So whan they came into a lyttelle towne, where a newe pillory was sette vp, he that sayde he coude lyghtly assemble people to gether, went to the bayly of the towne, whiche was

a boucher, and desyred him, that he wolde gyue him leaue to haue the maidenheed of the pyllory. whiche requeste at the fyrste abasshed the bayllie: for he wyst not what he mente therby: wherfore he toke counsayle of his neighbours, what was best to do, and they bade him set vp the knaue and spare nat. So whan he was on the pillorye, he loked aboute, and sawe his ii. felowes busy in the holes of the bouchers aprons, wher thei vsed to put theyr money: than he said: Ther now go to a pace. The people gaped vp styll and laughed. and whan he saw that his felowes had sped their maters, and were going away, he said to the peple: Now turne the pilori ones about and than I wyl com downe: So they laughing hartily did, whan the fellow was com downe from the pyllory, the baylie sayde to hym: By my faythe thou arte a good felowe, and by cause thou haste made vs so good sporte, holde I wyll gyue the a grote to drynke: and so putte his hande in the hole of his apron, but there he founde neuer a peny: Cockes armes (quod the bayllie) my pourse is pycked, and my moneye is gone. Syr (quod the felowe) I truste ye wyll beare me recorde, that I haue hit nat. No by the masse quod he, thou were on the pyllorie the whyle. Than no force quod the fellow, and wente his waye.

¶ *Of the wydowes daughter that was sent to the abbot with a couple of capons. xcv.*

¶ THERE was an abbot that had a wydowe to his tenant, which wydow on a tyme sent her doughter with a couple of capons to the abbotte. And whan the mayden came with her present, she founde the abbot syttyng at dyner, to whom she sayd: Moch good dutte the my lorde. Ha welcome mayden quod he. My lorde (quod she) my mother hath sent the here a couple of capons. God a mercy mayden, quod he. And so he made her to be sette downe atte his owne table to eate some meate. Amonge other meates, the abbotte had than a grene goose with sorell sauce, whereof he dyd eate. So one that sat at the abbottes table, gaue the rompe of the goose to the mayde to picke theron. She toke the rompe in her hande, and bycause she sawe the abbot and other wete their meate in the sorell sauce, she sayde. My lorde, I pray the gyue me leue to wete myn **** in thy grene sauce.

¶ *Of the two men, that dranke a pynte of whyte wyne to gether. xcvi.*

¶ THERE came two homely men of the countreie in to a tauerne on a tyme to

drinke a pynte of wine. So they satte styлле, and wyste not what wyne to calle for. At last, herynge euerye man call for white wyne as clere as water of the rocke, they bad the drawer brynge them a pynte of whyte wyne as clere as water of the rocke. The drawer seyng and perceyuyng by their wordes that they were but blont felowes, he brought them a pynte of clere water. The one of them fylled the cuppe, and dranke to his felow, and sayd : Holde neighbour, by masse, chadde as lefe drynke water, saue only for the name of wyne.

¶ *Of the doctour that went wyth the fouler to catch byrdes.* xcvij.

¶ THERE was a doctour on a tyme, whiche desired a fouler, that went to catche byrdes with an owle, that he might go with hym. The byrder was content, and dressed hym with bowes, and set hym by his oule, and bade him say nothyng. whan he saw the byrdes a lyght a pace, he sayde : There be many byrdes alyghted, drawe thy nettes : where with the byrdes flewe awaye. The byrder was very angry, and blamed him greatly for his speakyng. Than he promysed to holde his peace. whan the byrder was in again, and many byrdes were alyghted,

mayster doctour said in latyn, *Aves permulte adsunt*. wherwith the byrdes flewe away. The byrder came out ryghte angrye and sore displeased and sayde: that by his bablynge, he had twyse loste his pray. why thynekst thou foole (quoth the doctour) that the byrdes do vnderstand latin? This doctour thought that the vnderstandynge, and nat the noyse hadde feared awaye the byrdes.

¶ *Of hym that vndertoke to teache an asse to rede.* xcix.

¶ THERE was a certayne tyran, the which to pylle one of his subiectes of his goodes, commaunded hym to teache an asse to spelle and rede. He sayd it was impossible, except he might haue space inough therto. And whan the tyran bade hym aske what tyme he wolde, he desyred x. yeres respite. But yet bycause he undertoke a thyng impossible; euerye bodye laughed hym to scorne. He tourned towarde his frendes and sayde: I am nothyng affrayde: for in that space, either I, the asse, or elles my lorde may dye.

By whiche tale appereth, that it is hol-some to take leyser inough, aboute a thyng that is harde to do, specially whanne a man can nat chose to take hit on hande.

¶ *Of the fryer that confessed the woman.*
xcviij.

¶ As a fayre yong woman of the towne of Amilie confessed her to a friere, he beganne to burne so in concupiscence of the flesshe, that he entyced her to consente to his wylle. And they agreed, that she shulde feyne her selfe sycke, and sende for hym to shryue her. within iij. dayes after she feyned her self sycke, and laye downe in her bedde, and sente for the same fryere to shryue her. whan the friere was come, and euery body voided out of the chambre, he went to bedde to the woman, and there lay a longe space with her. Her husbände suspectyng so longe a confession, came in to the chambre: whose sodayne comynge, so sore abasshed the fryer, that he went his way and lefte his breche behynde him lyenge on the bedde. whan her husbände sawe the breche, he sayd aloude: This was nat a frier, but an aduouterer: And for great abbomination of the dede he called all his householde to se hit. And forthe with he went and complayned to the warden of that couent: and threatened to slee hym, that had done the dede. The wardyen to appease his anger sayde, that suche publysshynge was to the shame of hym and his householde. The man said:

the breche was so openly founde, that he coude nat hyde it, The warden to remedy the matter sayde, it was saynt Fraunces breche, an holy relyke, that his brother caryed thither for the womans helth, and that he and his couent wolde come and fetch hit home with procession. with those wordes the man was contente. Anone the warden and his frieres, with the crosse before them, and arayed in holye vestementes, went to the house and toke vppe the breche, and two of them on a clothe of sylke, bare it solemlye on hyghe betweene theyr handes: and euerye bodye that mette them, kneled downe and kyssed it. So with great ceremony and songe: they brought it home to their couente. But after whanne this was knowen, ambassadoures of the same citie, wente and complayned thereof before the holy see apostolyke.

¶ *Howe a chaplain of Louen deceyed an
usurer. c.*

¶ IN the towne of Louen was a chaplayne called Antonye, of whose merye sayenges and doynge is moche talkynge. As he mette on a daye one or two of his acqueyntaunce, he desyred them home with him to dyner: but meate had he none, nor money.

There was no remedy, but to make a shefte. Forth he goth, and in to an vserers kytchynne, with whome he was famylier : and priueilye vnder his gowne he caryed oute the potte with meate, that was sod for the vsurers dyner. whan he came home, he putte oute the meate, and made the pot to be scoured bryght, and sente a boye with the same pot to the vserer to borowe ij. grotes theron : and bade the boye take a byll of his hande, that suche a brasse potte he delyuered hym. The boy did as he was bydde : and with the money that he hadde of the vsurer, he bought wine for theyr dyner. whan the vsurer should go to dyner, the potte and meate was gone, wherfore he all to chydde his mayde. She said there came no bodeye of all the daye, but syr Antony. They asked him : and he sayde he had none. At length they sayde in erneste, he and no man els had the pot. By my fayth (quod he) I borrowed suche a potte vpon a tyme, but I sente hit home agayne : and so called witnes to them, and sayde : Lo howe perylous it is to deale with men nowe a dayes withoute wrytynge : They wolde lay thefte to my charge, and if I had no wrytynge of the vsurers hande. And so he shewed oute the wrytynge. And whan they vnderstode the disceyte, there was good laughynge.

¶ *Of the same chaplen and one that spited him. ci.*

¶ THE same Antony dyned on a tyme with a sorte of merye felowes. Amonge whome there was one that greatly spited him in his scoffes and merye iestes. And as they sate laughynge and sporting, one asked whiche was the most reuerent part of mans bodye, one sayd the eie, an other the nose, but Antony, bycause he knewe his enuyr wolde name the clene contrarye, sayde the mouth was the most reuerent parte: Naye quod his enuyr, the parte that we sytte on is the moste reuerent. And bicause they meruayled whye, he made this reason, that he was moste honourable amonge the common people, that was fyrst sette. And the parte that he named was fyrste sette. whiche sayenge contented them, and they laughed merelye: He was nat a littell proude of his sayenge, and that he hadde ouer come Antonye. This past forth, four or fyve dayes after they were bothe bydde to dyner in a nother place. whan Antony cam in he found his enuier that sat talkyng with other, whyle the diner was makynge redy. Antony tourned his backe to him and let a great ***** agaynst his face. His enuyr

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greatlye disdayninge sayde: walke knaue with a myschiefe, where hast thou ben nourtered. why, and dysdaynst thou? quod Antony, if I had saluted the with my mouthe, thou woldest haue saluted me agayne: and nowe I grete the with that parte of my body, that by thyn owne sayenge is moste honourable, thou callest me knaue.

Thus he got agayne his praise, that he hadde loste before.

¶ *Of the olde man that put him selfe in his sonnes handes. cij.*

¶ THERE was a certayne olde man, whiche let his sonne to mary, and to brynge his wyfe and his chyldren, to dwelle within him, and to take all the house in to his owne hande and gydinge. So a certeyne tyme the olde man was sette and kepte the vpper ende of the table, afterwarde they sette him lower, aboute the myddes of the table, thyrdely they set him at the nether ende of the table, fourthly he was set amonge the seruantes, fyfthly they made him a couche behynde the halle dore, and cast on him an olde sacke clothe. Nat longe after the olde man died. whan he was deed, the young mans sonne came to him and sayde: Father I pray you gyueme this olde sacke cloth, that was wont

to couer my graundfather, what woldest thou do with it sayde his father? forsoth, sayd the chylde, it shall serue to couer you whan ye be olde, lyke as it did my grandfather. At whiche wordes of the chylde this man ought to haue ben a shamed and sory. For it is wryten. Sonne reuerence and helpe thy father in his olde age, and make him not thoughtfull and heuy in his lyfe, and though he dote forgyue it him. He that honoreth his father, shall lyve the longer, and shall reioyce in his owne chyl dren.

¶ *Of hym that had a flye peynted in his shilde. ciij.*

¶ A YONGE man that on a tyme went a warfare, caused a flye to be peynted in his shylde, euen of the very greatnes of a flye: wherfore some laughed at hym and sayde, ye do well, because ye wyll not be knowen. yes quod he, I do it because I wyll be knowen and spoken of. For I wyll approach so nere our enemys, that they shall well decerne what armes I beare.

Thus it that was layde to him for a blame of cowardise, was by his sharpe wytte turned to a shewe of manlynnes.

¶ And the noble and valiaunt Archidamus sayde shotte of crossebowes, slynges, and suche lyke ingins of warre are no proffe of manhode, but whan they come and fyghte hande to hande, appeareth who be men and who be not.

¶ *Of th emperour Augustus and the olde men.* civ.

¶ As the noble emperour Augustus on a time cam in to a bayne, he behelde an olde man that hadde done good seruice in the warres, frotte him selfe a gaynste a marble pyller for lacke of one to helpe to wasshe him, th emperour moued with pite gaue an annuite to fynde hym aud a seruant to wayte vpon him. whan this was knowen a great sorte of olde men drewe them to gether, and stode where as the emperour shulde passe forth by, euerye one of them rubbynge his owne backe with a marble stone. The emperour demaunded why they dyd so? By-cause noble emperour, sayd they, we be not able to kepe seruantes to do it. why quod the emperour, one of you maye clawe and frote an others backe well inough.

¶ *Phocions oration to the Athens.* cv.

¶ PHOCION on a daye treatynge a longe oration to the people of Athenes, plesed them very wel. And whan he sawe, that they all to gether allowed his wordes, he tourned to his frendes and sayd. Haue I vnwarely spoken any hurte? So moche he perswaded hym selfe, that nothyng could plese them that was well and truly spoken.

¶ *Of Demosthenes and Phocion.* cvi.

¶ DEMOSTHENES sayde to Phocion: If the Atheniens falle ones in a madnes, they woll slee the. To whom he answered: ye surely, if they waxe madde they woll slee me, but an they waxe ones wyse, they wyll slee the. For Demosthenes spake moche to the peoples pleasure, and spake thynges rather delytable than holsome.

¶ *Of Phocion that refused Alexanders gyfte.*
cvij.

¶ WHAT tyme Alexander kynge of Macedone sent an hundred besauntes of golde for a gyfte to Phocion, he asked them that brought the money, how it came, that Alex-

ander sent it to hym alone, seying there were many other men in Athenes beside him. They answered, bycause he iudgeth you alone to be an honest and a good man. Therefore, quod he, let hym suffre me to be taken and to be suche one styll.

Who wolde not wonder at the cleane and vncorrupt courage of this Phocion? He was but a poore man, and yet the greatnes of the gyft coude nothings moue hym. Besyde also he shewed, that they, the whiche, while the mynistre the common welthe, absteine not from takyng of gyftes, neyther be nor ought not to be taken for good men.

¶ *Of Denyse the tyranne and his sonne.*
cviij.

¶ WHAT tyme Denyse the tyranne vnderstode that his sonne that shulde reigne after hym, had commytted aduoutry with a worshipfull mans wyfe, angerly he sayde to hym, Dyd I, thy father, euer suche a dede? The yonge man answered. No, ye had not a kynge to your father. Nor thou, sayde Denyse, art not lyke to haue a sonne a kynge, excepte thou leaue commyttinge of suche wyckedde dedes.

¶ *Of Pomponius the Romaine, that was brought before Mithridates.* cix.

¶ POMPONIVS a noble man of Rome, sore hurte and wounded, was taken and brought before Mithridates, whiche asked hym this questyon. If I cure and heale thy woundes wylte thou than be my frende: he answered hym agayne thus. If thou wylte be a frende to the Romaines, thou shalt than haue me thy frende.

This was a noble stomacke, that preferred the welth of his countrey before his owne helth.

¶ *Of Titus and the iester.* cx.

¶ SÜETONIUS sheweth that Titus the father prouoked a scoffer, that stode iesting with euery body, thot he shulde lyke wyse saye somewhat to hym: I woll, sayde the scoffer, after ye haue done youre easement. He iested at the emperours countenance, he looked alway as one that streyned hym selfe. On suche a visaged man writeth Martiall.

*Utere lactucis, ac mollibus utere maluis.
Nam faciem durum Phebe cacantis habes.*

¶ *Of Scipio Nasica and Ennius the poete.*

cxi.

¶ **WHAN** Scipio Nasica came on a tyme to speake with Ennius the Poete, he asked his mayde at the dore, if he were within, and she sayde, he was not at home. But Nasica perceyued, that her mayster badde her say so, and that he was within : but for that tyme dissemblynge the matter, he wente his waye. within a fewe dayes after Ennius came to Nasica, and knockyng at the dore. asked if he were within. Nasica hym selfe spake oute a loude, and sayd, he was not at home. Than sayde Ennius. what manne, thynke you that I knowe not your voyce ? where vnto Nasica aunsweredde and sayde. what a dishoneste man be you ? whan I sought you, I beleued your mayde, that sayd ye were not at home, and ye wyll not beleue me myn owne selfe.

¶ *Of Fabius Minutius, and his sonne.*

cxij.

¶ **FABIUS** Minutius was of his sonne exhorted on a tyme to gette and conquere a place that was mete for them, and to theyr

great auauntage: the whyche thyng he sayde, they might do with the losse of a fewe men. wyll ye be one of those fewe, sayde Fabius to his sonne?

Therby shewynge, that it is a poynt of a good capiteyne to care for the lest of his souldiours, and to saue them as nere as he coude.

Th emperour Antonius Pius loued moche this sentence of Scipio, whiche wolde ofte saye: I hadde leauer saue one citezen, thanne slee a thousande ennemyes.

¶ *Of Aurelian, that was displeased, by-
cause the cite Tyana was closed
agaynst hym. cxiiij.*

¶ WHAT tyme the emperour Aurelian came to the cytie Tyana, he founde hit closed agaynste hym, wherfore all angerly he sayde: I woll not leaue a dogge a lyue in this towne. whiche wordes reioyced moche his menne of warre, by cause of the great praye and botye, that they thoughte to wyne there. One of the citezins, called Heradamon, for feare lest he shuld be slayne amonge the other, betrayed the cyte. whan Aurelian had taken the cite, the fyrst thinge he did, he slewe Heradamon the traytour to his contrey. And to his souldiours, that

came to hym and desyred, that they myght accordynge to his promyse, ouerren and spoile the cyte, he answered: Go to, I sayde, I wolde nat leaue a dogge a lyue, spare nat, kyll al the dogges in the towne.

By this meane the gentyl prince, rewarded the traytoure accordinge to his deseruinge, and dispoined the couetise of his souldyours.

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¶ Cum priuilegio.

†

GLOSSARY.

ADUOUTRY, adultery.
AMBAGIOUS, circumlocutory.
BAYNE, *Fr. bain*, a bath.
CHADDE, *Ich had*, I had.
DANGEROUS, difficult, sparing.
DUTTE, do't, do it.
FROTTE, *Fr.* to rub.
GARNISON, *Fr.* garrison.
GRYCE, step.
GUERYSHEDDE, *Fr. guerissoit*, healed, recovered.
HOVEDDE, flocked, hovered.
HYGH ALMAYN, *Allemagne, Fr.* High Germany.
IWYSS, truly, verily.
JANWAYES, *Lat. Janua*, Genoese.
LEASYNG, a lye, a falsehood.
LIMITOUR, a friar licensed to beg within a certain district
LYBELL, *Lat. libellus*, a book.
PERYSSHYNS, parishioners.
POLLER, a cheat.
POLLYNGE, cheating.
PREACED, pressed.
PROOLED, sought.
PYLLED, pillaged.
QUENGERED, conjured.
ROWNED, whispered.

GLOSSARY.

SCROWES, scrolls, writings.

SERVAGE, slavery.

SHALES, shells.

SKELES, skill.

STRAUGHT, stretched.

SWEVENES, dreams.

SYTHE, since.

TOTETH, gazeth.

TOTTYE, dizzy.

VAYLED, availed.

WENDE, guessed, supposed.

WENE, guess, suppose.

WHOTETH, knoweth.

WYTE, blame, fault.

YETE, eat.

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